Student Handbook
Academic Year 2017-2018

Prepared for:
Class of 2019

Prepared by:
PA Program Faculty & Staff

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Vision Statement
The goal of the Penn State Physician Assistant Program is to obtain and maintain a fully accredited, nationally recognized Physician Assistant program that will attract diverse, academically qualified students committed to the health care professions. It is the Program’s intent to prepare these motivated individuals for their professional roles as Physician Assistants, the national certification examination, and for ultimate employment as Physician Assistants.

Mission Statement
The Physician Assistant (PA) Program’s mission is to prepare graduates to be academically, clinically, professionally, and culturally competent in the delivery of health care services to patients in the community in which they will practice. Our PA Program will foster an attitude of student-centered learning which puts the focus of education on preparing its graduates to apply clinical reasoning and an evidence-based approach in a compassionate and comprehensive, cost-effective manner.

Objectives of the Penn State Physician Assistant Program:
- Recruit a highly motivated, resilient, academically capable student population.
- Matriculate a qualified student population that is able to successfully complete the education and training in order to thrive in their professional role as physician assistants.
- Continue provisional accreditation and attain continuing accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).
- Provide a comprehensive pre-clinical curriculum.
- Provide sufficient excellent and diverse clinical sites and clinical educational experiences.
- Focus on providing preventive health care services, care for both acute and chronic disease
- Support the development and recognition of the importance of life-long learning and promotion of cultural diversity.
- Recruit and retain quality faculty and administrative staff.
- Maintain the necessary facilities, technology, materials, and equipment for exceptional student instruction.
- Impart necessary biomedical and clinical knowledge and technical skills for learners. This education should provide students with the ability to perform well in the clinical arena and on national standardized tests such as the PACKRAT (Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating Assessment Tool) and Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE).
- Provide interprofessional educational and experiential practice-based experiences that prepares students to perform the tasks, functions, and duties of a Physician Assistant in a team-based health care delivery system.
- Develop students as professionals, instilling an appropriate professional demeanor and sensibility, along with imparting an understanding of the nature and impact of mental and physical aspects of disease. This will enable students to appropriately manage and treat patients in various settings.
• Cultivate the fundamental ethical and moral attitudes, principles and behaviors that are essential to acquiring and sustaining the confidence of colleagues, other health care professionals, patients and the community.
• Broaden the base and depth of biomedical, scientific, and clinical knowledge and skills imparted to Physician Assistants by providing a foundation conducive to competent scholarly inquiry and analysis.
• Develop an enhanced sense of compassion through service learning while voluntarily caring for patients at LionCare (student operated free medical clinic in Harrisburg).

Philosophical Principles:
• **Compassion:** We believe that the foundation of all health care begins with compassion for the patient. Compassion necessitates that the practitioner view the patient from the patient’s point of view with the understanding that patients are in a vulnerable and sometimes seemingly hopeless situation. We believe that our students should be able to empathize with the patients and to serve them in a professional and understanding way.

• **Attentiveness:** Focusing on the patient and family to demonstrate our caring for this vulnerable population.

• **Commitment:** Healthcare is a challenging vocation, and this education depends on a great deal of commitment on the part of the Physician Assistant student. We believe that students matriculating into our program will be consistently challenged throughout their educational process. Healthcare should be a passion for the student, which entails that the student to dedicate himself or herself to becoming the best healthcare provider possible.

• **Accountability:** Students are ultimately in charge of their educational journey and will prioritize their mastery of learning this material through conscientious practice and reflection.

• **Competency:** Physician Assistants have a great deal of responsibility in the care of their patients. Adequate preparation, both academically and professionally, is needed in order to render the best healthcare possible for our patients. Students enrolled in our program are given the necessary tools for them to become competent healthcare providers through their development of critical reasoning and ability to apply such skills. After completion of the training, our graduates will contribute to the healthcare delivery systems now and in the future.
Expected Graduate Functions and Tasks

As a result of their education and training, graduates of the Penn State Physician Assistant Program learn to perform with competency and proficiency functions and tasks involved in patient: a) evaluation, b) monitoring, c) diagnostics, d) therapeutics, e) counseling, f) referral, and g) prescribing practices.

A. Evaluation
Program graduates will be able to:

1. Elicit a detailed, accurate and comprehensive patient history;
2. Organize and present data from the history and physical examination;
3. Perform an appropriate physical examination for patients across their lifespan in various types of settings;
4. Delineate pertinent problems, if present;
5. Initiate requests for routine and emergency diagnostic procedures;
6. Assist with obtaining specimens and with establishing priorities for appropriate diagnostic and laboratory testing;
7. Evaluate the need for preventive healthcare measures such as vaccinations, routine laboratory and diagnostic studies, and screening procedures (e.g., mammograms, hemoccult testing).

B. Monitoring
Program graduates will be able to:

1. Conduct rounds in acute, ambulatory, and long-term patient care settings;
2. Develop and implement patient management plans;
3. Facilitate the ordering of needed diagnostic tests;
4. Record progress notes.

C. Diagnostics
Program graduates will be able to appropriately order and interpret the following diagnostic tests:

1. Common Laboratory Tests
   a. Blood count, including differential smears and platelet counts, tests of electrolytes, bleeding and clotting times, erythrocyte indices, and erythrocyte sedimentation rates
   b. Appropriate cultures
   c. Urinalysis
   d. Routine stool studies
   e. Intradermal skin tests (PPD)
   f. Pap smears
   g. Serum chemistry studies
   h. Arterial blood gases
   i. Pulmonary function tests
   j. Renal function tests
   k. Liver function tests
   l. Acute and chronic cardiac tests (lipid profiles, troponin, EKG etc.)
2. Radiographic Studies
   a. Conventional radiograph of the chest, abdomen, and extremities
   b. Ultrasound
   c. Other imaging studies, including CT scanning, MRI and PET scanning.

D. Therapeutics
   Program graduates will be able to:
   1. Perform phlebotomies and arterial punctures
   2. Administer oxygen therapy
   3. Perform nasogastric intubation and gastric lavage
   4. Remove impacted cerumen
   5. Incise and drain superficial skin infections
   6. Remove foreign bodies from eyes, ears and nose (when appropriate)
   7. Administer medications via various routes
   8. Initiate intravenous catheterization
   9. Insert central venous catheters
   10. Manage complications due to administration of medications
   11. Order and administer immunizations
   12. Apply and remove casts and splints
   13. Dress and evaluate post-operative wounds
   14. Catheterize the urinary bladder
   15. Clean, debride, and repair minor lacerations; remove sutures
   16. Assist in surgery and obstetrical deliveries
   17. Defibrillate and cardiovert patients with life-threatening arrhythmias; operate an automated external defibrillator
   18. Follow aseptic and isolation techniques
   19. Perform Pap smears

   Program graduates will be able to initiate management of acute life-threatening situations such as:
   1. Motor vehicle accidents
   2. Airway obstruction and respiratory failure
   3. Cardiac arrest and other arrhythmias
   4. Head trauma; initial management of the traumatized patient
   5. Management of a patient with acute vascular insult such as ruptured or dissecting aneurysm

E. Counseling
   Program graduates will be able to provide instruction and counseling to patients regarding:
   1. Preventive medicine and health promotion techniques
   2. The necessity for compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimens
   3. Normal growth and development in the pediatric patient
   4. Family planning decisions
5. Implications of informed consent and patient education regarding certain
diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, diseases, and medications
6. Instruction in patient education for development of healthy lifestyles, along
with providing patient insight on the impact of habits and lifestyles on health.

F. Referral
   Program graduates will be able to:
   1. Recognize their own practice limitations
   2. Facilitate timely referral of patients to supervising physicians and others in the
      interdisciplinary health care team.

G. Prescribing Practices
   The graduate will be able to competently prescribe medications according to
   supervising physician delegation and state law.
Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession
(Originally adopted 2005; revised 2012)

PREAMBLE
Between 2003-2004, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) led an effort with three other national PA organizations (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), and Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) -- formerly Association of Physician Assistant Programs (APAP)) to define PA competencies in response to similar efforts conducted within other health care professions and the growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice. The resultant document, Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession, provided a foundation from which physician assistant organizations and individual physician assistants could chart a course for advancing the competencies of the PA profession.
This document was updated in 2012 and then approved in its current form by the same four organizations.

INTRODUCTION
This document serves as a map for the individual PA, the physician-PA team, and organizations committed to promoting the development and maintenance of professional competencies among physician assistants. While some competencies will be acquired during formal PA education, others will be developed and mastered as physician assistants progress through their careers. The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and educational experiences requisite for physician assistants to acquire and demonstrate these competencies.
The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. Professional competencies for physician assistants include the effective and appropriate application of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice.
Patient-centered, physician assistant practice reflects a number of overarching themes. These include an unwavering commitment to patient safety, cultural competence, quality health care, lifelong learning, and professional growth. Furthermore, the profession’s dedication to the physician-physician assistant team benefits patients and the larger community.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT COMPETENCIES
Medical Knowledge
Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:
- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
• signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
• appropriate diagnostic studies
• management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
• interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
• screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
• history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

Interpersonal & Communications Skills
Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients’ families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system. Physician assistants are expected to:
• create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
• use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
• adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
• work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
• demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
• accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes
Patient Care
Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable. Physician assistants are expected to:

- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
- make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
- develop and implement patient management plans
- counsel and educate patients and their families
- perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
- provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance
- use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education

Professionalism
Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. Physician assistants must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician assistants are expected to demonstrate:

- understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- respect, compassion, and integrity
- accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- commitment to excellence and on-going professional development
- commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and abilities
- self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
- healthy behaviors and life balance
- commitment to the education of students and other health care professionals
Practice-based Learning & Improvement
Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which physician assistants engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistants are expected to:
- analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients’ health
- apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
- recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others

Systems-based Practice
Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. PAs should work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:
- effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
- practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes
- accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
- recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
- apply the concepts of population health to patient care

Adopted 2012 by ARC-PA, NCCPA, and PAEA Adopted 2013 by AAPA
As part of the overall goals and policies of the Penn State College of Medicine, students are expected to exhibit professional and altruistic behavior at all times. Additionally, students are expected to demonstrate professionalism as outlined by the AAMC, as detailed below.

a. Students should exhibit honesty and integrity, including:
   - Forthright, truthful and trustworthy behavior.
   - Appropriate identification of status when participating in patient care.
   - Showing ethical behavior at all times.

b. Students should demonstrate responsibility and reliability, including:
   - Punctuality and meeting deadlines.
   - Compliance with policies, rules, regulations and laws.
   - Attendance at required sessions.
   - Demonstration of appropriate prioritization between personal and professional life.
   - Demonstration of accountability, including appropriate assumption of responsibility and reporting of inappropriate behaviors.

c. Students should demonstrate respect for others, including:
   - Respecting the authority and knowledge of other professionals.
   - Working well with and showing respect to all team members.
   - Showing appropriate grooming and cleanliness.

d. Students should demonstrate altruism and empathy, including:
   - Showing appropriate concern for others.
   - Perception and acknowledgment of other people’s physical, emotional and social needs.
   - Demonstration of sensitivity and concern regarding those needs.
   - Maintenance of objectivity in difficult interactions with other individuals.

e. Students should demonstrate commitment to competence and excellence, including:
   - Setting, achieving and reflecting on realistic goals.
   - Routinely seeking to develop additional knowledge and skills.
   - Striving for excellence rather than to just meet minimum standards.

f. Students should demonstrate responsibility for self-assessment and self-improvement, including:
   - Admission of errors and accepting responsibility for actions.
   - Seeking feedback, and implementing changes as a result of feedback.
   - Demonstration of appropriate self-confidence.
   - Asking for help when appropriate.

g. Students should demonstrate respect for patients and their families, including:
   - Sensitivity to patients' beliefs, opinions, gender, race, culture, religion, sexual preference, and status.
• Respecting patients’ autonomy and right to choose.
• Demonstration and maintenance of sensitivity to confidential patient information.

Office of Student Health
Infectious Disease Prevention Program

Current Student Health Guidelines are listed on the PSU Student Health Website: https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/student-health/

Purpose
• Prevent the transmission of vaccine preventable disease.
• Safeguard the health of medical students by providing protective immunity for vaccine preventable disease and/or prophylactic treatment when available.

Policy Statement
• Penn State College of Medicine
• All medical and physician assistant students will participate in the infectious disease prevention program.

Preventive Health Requirements for New Medical and Physician Assistant Students
• Prior to matriculation all students must undergo a complete history and physical examination.
• The results of the examination must be reported to the College of Medicine Student Health Office. These records will be maintained confidentially in the Student Health Office.
• Students identified by reviewing pre-matriculation physical examination reports as having a chronic illness or other need to establish care will be contacted by the Student Health Office to schedule an appointment.
• All students are encouraged to get yearly health maintenance exams to screen for hypertension and other illness.
• Student Health services offers yearly gynecological exams.

Tuberculosis Prevention
• Within three months prior to matriculation and annually thereafter students are required to have a PPD for Tuberculosis screening.
• If a student has a positive test for exposure to Tuberculosis, a chest x-ray must be done one month prior to matriculation in the first year of medical/PA school. If the student has converted during medical/PA school a chest x-ray will be done at that time.

Note: Policy fully applicable even if student gives history of BCG vaccination. All BCG vaccine recipients must have their PPD documented prior to matriculation.

Tuberculosis Exposure
• Treated PPD positive students should provide physician documentation of completed prophylactic isoniazid therapy.
• Students with a positive PPD will continue to be followed annually during medical/PA school. Students will be contacted by Student Health to confirm that they have not developed symptoms of Tuberculosis. If symptoms are present a
chest x-ray will be repeated, and the student will be given appropriate therapy if an active case is found.

- All PPD positive students will be counseled about treatment options. Students converting during medical/PA school to a positive PPD will be given free of charge, the necessary medications, blood work monitoring and studies.

**Hepatitis B Prevention**
- Documentation of current immunization with a series of 3 doses and a quantitative Hepatitis B surface antibody titer is required prior to matriculation. If quantitative Hepatitis B titer is inadequate the student will repeat the entire series without charge.
- A quantitative titer will be redrawn 6 to 8 weeks after the completion of the second series of Hepatitis B vaccine.
- If a student again fails to demonstrate immunologic response to the vaccine they will be counseled and given information about receiving Hepatitis B immunoglobin in the event of an invasive exposure.

**Varicella Prevention**
- Date of Varicella disease or documentation of immunizations and a Varicella IgG titer are required prior to matriculation.
- If a student presents with a negative titer and has completed the Varicella series a single booster may be given. No retiter will be done. If the student has a history of the disease and a negative titer, but not documentation of immunization, a series of 2 Varicella injections should be given.
- If a student has further concerns about a negative titer they will be referred to an Infectious Disease provider.

**Polio**
- Documentation of completed primary polio series is required prior to matriculation.
- If no documentation is available then confirmation of immunity must be done with titer. If the titer is negative students will be vaccinated with a series of 3 doses of vaccine.

**Rubeola (Measles)**
- Prior to matriculation students are required to have two doses of vaccine given after 12 months of age and a Rubeola IgG titer.
- If the titer is negative a single MMR booster will be given without retiter.
- If no immunization history is available a positive titer is acceptable.

**Mumps**
- Two immunizations after 12 months of age and a positive Mumps antibody IgG titer are required.
- If the titer is negative a single MMR booster will be given without repeating a second titer.

**Rubella (German Measles)**
- Two immunizations after 12 months of age and a positive Rubella Antibody IgG are required.
- If the titer is negative a single MMR booster will be given.

**Meningitis**
- One immunization is required for all students who will reside in campus housing. The Menactra vaccine is recommended.
- If vaccinated with Menommune more than 3 years prior to admission, students must be revaccinated or sign a waiver.
Influenza
- Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended annually.
- Immunizations are offered yearly, as supplies allow, in the fall. Students are not charged for influenza vaccinations. This is consistent with the goals of the medical center to protect students, employees, and patients from influenza.
- Students who decline the influenza vaccine must sign a declination form.
- When a student receives the vaccine, a sticker will be placed on his/her ID badge as proof of vaccination for the season.
- Unvaccinated students must wear a surgical mask when within six feet of a patient (inpatient and outpatient) throughout influenza season.
- Students who receive the vaccine elsewhere must provide proof of vaccination to Student Health. If proof is not provided, it will be assumed that the student is not vaccinated.
- The start and end of the influenza season will be determined by Infection Prevention and the hospital epidemiologist based on local and regional influenza activity.
- A progressive discipline policy is in effect for all non-compliance.

Tetanus/Diphtheria/Acellular Pertussis
- This is the recommended vaccine as of 10/26/2005 by the ACIP for adults having a Tetanus immunization.
- If the student’s last tetanus booster is longer than 2 years out, they will be required to receive the Tdap vaccine.

Invasive Incidents
- If an invasive incident or exposure occurs students are expected to report immediately for care at Employee Health and are to follow the invasive incident protocol.

Visiting Students
- Visiting students are required to meet the same immunizations requirements as currently enrolled students.
- Student Health personnel review vaccine records of visiting students. Outstanding requirements are reported to the department sponsoring the student’s clinical clerkship.
- It is the responsibility of the clinical department to insure all requirements are met. Student Health personnel may be consulted on the requirements if interpretation is needed.

Travel Immunizations
- Student Health does not provide travel immunizations. Students are referred to local travel clinics.

Occupational Exposure
- Students are required to have mask fit testing prior to the start of the clinical rotations. Students will be educated in the method of prevention of airborne and blood borne pathogens and procedures to follow should exposure occur.
- The school will assure the financial responsibility for treatment of HIV exposure and prophylaxis as well as conversion to a positive PPD.

Compliance Regulations
- The Penn State College of Medicine has specific immunizations requirements in place to protect both students and patients. Students will receive notification of these requirements as they come due. All students are expected to respond to
these notifications. Students who are not compliant may be denied the opportunity to continue their studies until the necessary requirements are met.

**Blood-borne Exposure Control Program**

Blood-Borne Exposure Program is updated regularly at the following URL: https://students.med.psu.edu/md-students/student-health/blood-borne-pathogen-policy/

The OSHA Blood-borne Pathogen Standard applies to all occupational exposures to blood or other potentially infectious materials, including, but not limited to:

- Human blood and blood products and body fluids;
- Contaminated sharps;
- Microbiological sticks and cultures;
- Equipment which contacts any of the above is also considered potentially infectious.

Because the potential for infection exists, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all human blood and body fluids be treated as if they were known to be infected with HIV, HBV, HCV, or other blood-borne pathogens. These precautions, also known as “Standard Precautions”, represent an infection control procedure that assumes that all body fluids and body materials are potentially infectious.

The Penn State Physician Assistant Program follows the national leader, the “Center for Disease Control’s Annual Guidelines for Occupational Exposures”, related to potential contamination from potentially infectious blood and body fluids. The most recent guidelines can be found at the following WEB address: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/guidelines.html.

Students will be given the opportunity to review the OSHA Blood-borne Pathogen Standard and will be tested after this self-directed tutorial program. The testing schedule for the OSHA test will be announced, and students are required to successfully complete this examination before any patient contact is initiated.

**Public Health Service Guidelines for the Management of Healthcare Worker Exposures to HIV and Recommendations for Post-exposure Prophylaxis**

**Summary**

This report updates and consolidates all previous Public Health Service recommendations for the management of healthcare workers (HCWs) who have occupational exposure to blood and other body fluids that may contain human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It includes recommendations for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and discusses the scientific rationale for PEP. The decision to recommend HIV post-exposure prophylaxis must take into account the nature of the exposure (e.g., needle-stick or potentially infectious fluid that comes in contact with a mucous membrane) and the amount of blood or body fluid involved in the exposure.

Other considerations include pregnancy of the HCW and exposure to virus known or suspected to be resistant to anti-retroviral drugs. Assessments of the risk for infection
resulting from the exposure and of the infectivity of the exposure source are key
determinants of offering PEP. Systems are in place for the timely evaluation and
management of exposed HCWs and for consultation with experts in the treatment of
HIV when using PEP.

Recommendations for PEP have been modified to include a basic 4-week regimen of
two drugs for most HIV exposures and an expanded regimen that includes the addition
of a protease inhibitor for HIV exposures that pose an increased risk for transmission or
where resistance to one or more of the antiretroviral agents recommended for PEP is
known or suspected.

Occupational exposures should be considered urgent medical concerns to ensure
timely administration of PEP. Healthcare organizations have protocols that promote
prompt reporting and facilitate access to post-exposure care. Enrollment of HCWs in
registries designed to assess side effects in HCWs who take PEP is encouraged.

Students involved in clinical practice are to follow that office’s or healthcare facility’s
policy regarding occupational exposure. Regardless of the healthcare facility’s own
policy, the student is required to notify the Penn State PA Program Clinical
Coordinator of an incident within 24 hours of the incident occurrence. If a needle
stick or other invasive incident occurs, call the Sharps Injury Hotline at 717 531-
7775. Report to Employee Health or to the Emergency Department as directed by the
hotline. Report injury or exposure to the supervising physician. Follow up with Employee
Health as directed. If the invasive incident occurs at unaffiliated clinic sites or institutions
follow the established local policy for exposure. Clinic sites without specific protocol call
the Sharps Hotline at 717 531-7775. Students are allowed travel time during a rotation
to return to HMC for medical care pertaining to a sharps injury or body fluid exposure.
An incident report must be filed through the University. Students may be referred to the
University’s health center, their own private physician, or the facility in which the
exposure took place, as deemed necessary for appropriate follow-up. Students are
required to become familiar with the University’s policy with regard to the infectious
exposure policy. Any questions about the Blood-borne Pathogen Program should be
addressed to the Clinical Coordinator.

Penn State College of Medicine Hepatitis B and HIV Policy
Penn State College of Medicine requires all students to complete the Hepatitis B
immunization series. When the series is completed a quantitative Hepatitis B titer must
be drawn. If the titer is negative the series will be repeated. If a second titer is negative
the student will be counseled by a Student Health physician on procedure to follow if
they have an invasive incident.

Students are encouraged to know their Hepatitis B and HIV status. If a student is
Hepatitis B antigen positive or HIV positive, counseling will be available upon request or
referral by a healthcare provider. Counseling includes meeting with the infectious
disease specialist as well as the Director of Student Health. Students may be counseled
regarding their health as well as their career choices.

Students should follow universal precautions with all patient encounters. Students will
receive training in universal precautions during clinical skills week. Students will also be
educated on procedures to follow in the event of blood-borne exposure or invasive incident.

If an exposure has occurred, the student should call the **Sharps Injury Hotline at 717-531-7775**. The student will report to the Employee Health Department or the Emergency Department as directed by the hotline staff. Employee Health will initiate testing on the student as well as the source of the exposure. HIV Prophylactic therapy for high-risk exposures will be dispensed without charge. Students seen in the Emergency Department for an invasive incident should give their medical insurance information to the staff. This visit will be billed to the insurance and any remaining balance should be given to the Student Health Department for payment of these services. More information about invasive incidents is available on the Student Health website. [https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/student-health/sharps-injury-procedures/](https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/student-health/sharps-injury-procedures/)

**Definitions of Exposure**

An "exposure" that may place a “healthcare worker” (HCW) (this includes PA students for this section) at risk for HIV infection and therefore requires consideration of PEP is defined as a percutaneous injury (e.g., a needlestick or cut with a sharp object), contact of mucous membrane or non-intact skin (e.g., when the exposed skin is chapped, abraded, or afflicted with dermatitis), or contact with intact skin when the duration of contact is prolonged (i.e., several minutes or more) or involves an extensive area, with blood, tissue, or other body fluids. Body fluids include: a) semen, vaginal secretions, or other body fluids contaminated with visible blood that have been implicated in the transmission of HIV infection, and b) cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids, which have an undetermined risk for transmitting HIV.

The absence of visible blood in the saliva, exposure to saliva from a person infected with HIV is not considered a risk for HIV transmission. Also, exposure to tears, sweat, or non-bloody urine or feces does not require post-exposure follow-up. Human breast milk has been implicated in perinatal transmission of HIV. However, occupational exposure to human breast milk has not been implicated in HIV transmission to HCWs. Moreover, the contact HCWs may have with human breast milk is quite different from perinatal exposure and does not require post-exposure follow-up.

**Recommendations for All Students**

Working in a clinical setting can expose the student to a wide variety of health risks and infectious disorders. While students will receive formal training in Infection Control and Blood-borne Pathogens, this outline should serve as a reminder to illustrate some of the important points. We believe that it is imperative that the student be familiar with the modes of transmission of common infectious disorders, and the ways to prevent the spread of these diseases.

Students will be in-serviced on current OSHA standards and information. Successful completion of the OSHA program will be documented in the student’s file. The OSHA self-directed tutorial is available on a campus computer system (students will be advised of specific location), and the student must successfully complete a post-tutorial test prior to having formal contact with patients in the health care setting. The student
will need to register completion of this program on a **yearly** basis in order to meet eligibility criteria to be in contact with or treat patients in a clinical setting.

### Basics in Preventive Care

1. Always wash hands thoroughly between patient encounters using soap and water or antibacterial agents. Hand washing should be done before and after each patient encounter with a “wash in, wash out” procedure.

2. Students should assume that all body fluids or blood are infectious regardless of the patient’s diagnosis. Non-latex gloves should be worn at all times when handling potentially infectious material, or when there is a possibility of being exposed to, blood or body fluids. In situations where a risk of splashing of blood or body fluids exists, additional personal protective equipment such as goggles, gown, and masks should be worn. Students are responsible for supplying their own goggles at clinical sites and should bring them with them when on clinical rotations.

3. Gloves should be changed between all patient encounters. Hands should be washed after removal of gloves.

4. Never attempt to bend or recap needles. These should be properly disposed of in an approved “Sharps Container” directly after use. Most affiliated healthcare facilities are using the “needle-less” delivery system for IVs and heparin locks. The student should become familiar with these systems. Please notify the program if a clinical site is not conforming to these OSHA standards.

5. Pocket masks or Bag-Valve-Mask devices should ideally be used in performing artificial ventilation.

6. Spills of blood and body fluids should be cleaned with a detergent solution followed by decontamination with an appropriate chemical germicide such as Chlorox (Sodium Hypochloride 5.25%), dilute 1:10. If this is not available, rope off the area and contact the environmental services department at the site.

7. Infectious waste and sharps should be disposed of in the appropriate containers. Never place these in the regular trash.

8. Any student who sustains an incident at the clinical site where exposure to blood or body fluids occurs will follow the protocol established at that site. If an exposure occurs, the student should alert the Preceptor and the PA Program staff immediately so that appropriate measures may be taken. An incident report must be completed and submitted to the clinical coordinator within 24 hours of the incident. Incident Report forms are available from the PA office staff. We will be following the same protocol as the College of Medicine with regard to exposure and reporting of these incidents.

9. Appropriate respiratory protective masks should be worn when caring for patients with Tuberculosis. Fit masks will be supplied for each student prior to their attendance at clinical sites.

10. Never pick up broken glassware with your hands; always use a dustpan and brush or tongs. Dispose of broken glass in the proper receptacles. Use the biohazard containers if the glassware is contaminated.

11. Follow all Infection Control and Isolation Precaution policies and procedures of the institution in which you are working.

12. If you have any questions regarding Infection Control, please ask your preceptor or contact the Infection Control Department at the site (if available).
Students are required to immediately report to the Program staff any change in their health that would affect their ability to care for patients (especially any infectious diseases). The Program may require the student to obtain medical clearance before returning to clinical sites. Failure to report these health changes is a serious breach in professional responsibilities since health care providers and the program have a responsibility to protect the patients who are engaged in the health care setting. Failure to report these potential health care issues may result in dismissal from the Program. We have a responsibility to notify the clinical Preceptors if a student is at risk for causing potential harm to patients or other members of the healthcare team.

Our students will follow the same protocol and procedures as students enrolled in the College of Medicine with regard to potential infectious disease spread. Students may need to be pulled from clinical sites until a potential infection is remedied.

**Injuries in Anatomy Lab**

**Prevention**
Wear all required protective gear for every session, during class hours or after hours.

**Small Lacerations**
Wash the wound with soap and copious amounts of water. Place a dry sterile dressing over the area. A band-aid is appropriate and antibiotic ointment may be used. Student’s tetanus immunization should be within five years, if you are unsure call Student Health at 717-531-5998 to verify the date. If it is after hours, call the next day.

Watch the area for signs of infection such as worsening redness, pus, soreness and red streaks on the skin as the area heals.

**Larger Lacerations**
Larger lacerations are those roughly approaching 1 centimeter or greater. The wound should be washed with soap and copious amounts of water. If bleeding can be controlled use a bandage and watch for signs of infection as listed above. If bleeding cannot be stopped in 5 – 10 minutes, cover the area with a clean and absorbent towel and keep the area elevated.

Student Health should be called at 717-531-5998 for an appointment for suturing of the wound. After hours – call nurse triage or the outpatient family medicine physician on call for triage advice. Call Student Health if you are unsure of your tetanus immunization status.

**Serious Injuries and Wounds**
Student Health 717-531-5998 can be called first to triage a student to the appropriate place unless a wound is life, limb or sight threatening. These injuries should go to the Emergency Department, calling extension 8444 for transport when appropriate.

Students with loss of consciousness with trauma to the head should go directly to the Emergency Department. Students who experienced loss of consciousness should not attempt to walk and someone should contact extension 8444 to request transportation assistance.
Students with large wounds with rapid blood loss or involving nerves, tendon or bone should go to the Emergency Department for treatment.

For injuries requiring Emergency Department treatment, the College of Medicine will pay the student’s remaining patient bill for emergency room/ambulance service after the student demonstrates that their health insurance carrier has fulfilled their payment responsibilities.

**Policy Regarding Care of Students at Student Health**

Faculty members who provide psychiatric/psychological counseling or other sensitive health services to students will have no involvement in the academic evaluation or promotion of the student receiving those services.

This policy will be carried out by insuring the following:

There are designated student health providers who will provide health care services to students. These designated student health providers will have no involvement in the academic evaluation or promotion of any student. Faculty members who serve on student promotion committees or who serve as course directors will not serve as designated student health providers. No one from the physician assistant faculty will provide any type of student health services to students enrolled in the PA Program, including psychological counseling services.

Should emergent or urgent conditions or consultations arise for which a student must see a provider who is not a designated student health provider, that provider must recuse him/herself from any involvement in the academic evaluation or promotion of that student.

The director of student health will not have any involvement with the academic evaluation or promotion of any physician assistant student.

When students are on an away rotation and need health care services, preceptors should refer the student to another member of the practice or physician in the community who can competently care for the student and who have no involvement in the academic evaluation or promotion of students receiving their services.

Students, faculty members and staff members will be informed of this policy on a yearly basis.

**Office of Student Health Mental Health Policy**

The Website for the Office of Student Health is located at the following url: [https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/counseling/](https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/counseling/)

The purpose of the following policy is to coordinate communications regarding students who have significant mental health issues. This policy specifically provides the outline of the procedure and addresses continuity of care and oversight of students who have needed to take a leave of absence from their education secondary to a serious mental health problem or a student on campus with serious mental health issues that interferes with the ability to function as a student. A student who is deemed to be a risk to self or
others will be required to take a leave of absence for his/her own well being and for the safety of their peers and the community.

Students requiring a leave of absence due to mental health issues will follow the leave of absence policy and submit notification with appropriate documentation from his/her provider to the Vice Dean of Educational Affairs for approval. At this time the student will be instructed that, upon application for reinstatement of student status, documentation of clearance to return must be forwarded to the Vice Dean of Educational Affairs by the mental health provider who is responsible for treatment during the leave. The statement of clearance is necessary for the student to resume his/her education in the Physician Assistant Program in the College of Medicine.

In addition to this clearance, the student is required to sign a release of information form to facilitate the communication of their mental health records to the local mental health provider and the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs. This policy is to protect both the student and the patients that he/she is seeing at the clinical sites.

Penn State College of Medicine and the Penn State Physician Assistant Program are not required to allow students with uncontrolled mental health issues to resume studies if the student declines appropriate mental health care.

A review committee consisting of the Vice Dean of Educational Affairs, Director of Student Development, Division Director for Behavioral Health Services, the Director of Student Health and the Student Ombudsman will meet and discuss the action plan for follow up care developed by the student's treating mental health provider. These recommendations require approval of the Review Committee before the student may return to school. If appropriate, the committee reserves the right to reconvene to discuss the student's ability to function as a student. The review committee may make decisions regarding further care of students with significant mental health issues with regard to maintenance of student status.

The mental health provider treating the student after his/her leave will be notified of the necessary requirements for the student return and retention in the PA Program, as outlined by the review committee. The student will be informed of the need for compliance with these conditions in order to reenter and maintain student status.

In the situation when it is recommended that the student have periodic assessment for fitness of duty from the mental health provider, the provider must notify the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs at predetermined intervals with a statement that the student is in compliance with care and remains able to function in the educational environment. A form will be provided for completion and forwarding to accomplish this requirement.

If a notification of the student’s continued ability to pursue their education is not received as predetermined, the student will be notified to contact their provider to obtain this required information. The student may not be eligible for return to the PA Program unless all required paperwork is completed and returned to the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs.

The registrar and assistant to the Vice Dean will maintain a list of the students who are on leave of absence. The student’s advisor will be notified of the student’s leave of
absence and return to school. It is imperative for the student to promptly notify the program, in writing, of the intent to take a leave since this notification may impact the ability of the student to obtain tuition refund based upon the date of withdrawal.

**Safety Protocol**  
*Procedure for handling mental health issues*

Should any faculty identify a concern about a student, the safety net in place will be immediately used to address the student's crisis. He or she will be referred to Dr. Kelly Holder, who is responsible for handling such problems. The program will make sure the referral can be followed up instantly; if not, the student will be encouraged to call the Dauphin County Crisis Hotline or visit the Emergency Department at Hershey Medical Center immediately. This plan is in keeping with the College of Medicine policy for students with a mental health crisis.

**Student Services and Facilities**  
The following services and facilities are available to Penn State College of Medicine Physician Assistant students. For full details, please refer to the [Student Life website](https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/). Consistent with ARC-PA requirements, our students have access to all services that are offered to all other graduate students within the University:

- Health Services  
- Counseling Center  
- Academic Resource Center  
- Food Services  
- Housing availability on campus which will be announced by the University-please contact student life for further information  
- University Fitness Center  
- Harrell Library and Technology Center  
- Peer tutoring, as arranged through the Program (no charge for the student)

**Penn State University Policy on Tuition Refund**  
Penn State University has a policy regarding the refunding of tuition and fees in the case that a student leaves the program prior to completing the semester. The PA program will follow the university policy which states that refunds for tuition are available and are based upon when the student officially withdraws from the program.

If a student leaves prior to the start of class, 100% of the tuition and fees are refunded. If the student leaves during the first week of classes 80% of tuition will be refunded. A decrease of 10% for each week after the second week of classes will be refunded up to the 8th week. Withdrawal from the semester after the eighth week of class will result in no refund of tuition or fees.

The deposit for matriculation is considered to be nonrefundable and the letter of offer extended to program applicants who are offered admission to the PA program will inform students of this policy. The deposit to hold a student's seat will be applied to the tuition for the program's first semester.

Visit [https://www.bursar.psu.edu/refund.cfm](https://www.bursar.psu.edu/refund.cfm) for additional information
University Regulations & Judicial Policies

Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity at Penn State is defined by Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 as “the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner.”

The University Code of Conduct states, “all students should act with personal integrity; respect other students’ dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.”

Academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, or falsification of information) will not be tolerated and can result in academic or disciplinary sanctions such as a failing grade (F) in the course and sanctions including dismissal from the PA Program.

The University’s regulations regarding academic policies, academic due process, appeals, plagiarism and cheating are listed on the Student Affairs’ website http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/. The Physician Assistant Program complies with the University’s policies in these matters. Students with unresolved issues should ordinarily initially see the instructor or preceptor for the course. If the issue remains unresolved, students are then to bring the matter to the Program Director who will make a determination on the appealed matter.

If the student is dissatisfied with the handling of the matter, the student may then file a written appeal. As part of the student appeal process, the Medical Director will serve as the Chairman of the Academic Appeals Committee. When an appeal is received, he/she will ordinarily bring the Appeals Committee together for consideration of the written appeal. The Vice Dean for Educational Affairs is the next level for academic appeals. All appeals in this process must be made in writing to the appropriate person(s).

At any point prior to the appeal to the Vice-Dean for Educational Affairs, the student can request a meeting with the ombudsperson of the PA Program. The ombudsperson is a respected member of the faculty for the College of Medicine who has extensive experience dealing with students and within the College of Medicine. The ombudsperson is not directly involved with the education and appraisal of students in the Physician Assistant Program so is viewed as an experienced neutral party. The ombudsperson’s role is to fully evaluate the situation and to lend an experienced perspective to the situation that the student is encountering. The ombudsperson serves as a consultant and advisor jointly for the program and student, and strives to provide perspective on the given situation that the student presents. The conversations held between the student and the ombudsperson is privileged and do not dictate policy or have any binding mediation.
As a final step in the appeal process, the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs, in consultation with the Academic Appeals Committee, will make a final determination for the student appeal. The decision of the Vice-Dean is final.

**Professional Phase Equipment Needs**

We do not require students to purchase an otoscope or ophthalmoscope because you will have access to these in the SIM lab. They are very expensive pieces of equipment that often go unused once you complete PA school as the vast majority of offices/hospitals/clinics provide these in each room. You can purchase an ophthalmoscope and/or otoscope, if you so choose, for your own personal use or for practicing at home, but this is not a PA program requirement. Because these two pieces are *optional*, it is important to note that otoscope and ophthalmoscope costs are not included into your annual cost of attendance for textbooks and medical equipment.

As shared with you during on-boarding, students are required to having the following during pre-clinical year:

Stethoscope: Your stethoscope must have a separate bell & diaphragm. You do not have to purchase an expensive, high end stethoscope. The color of your stethoscope is a personal choice. However, we would like you to keep in mind that darker colors are considered to be more professional. Littman Classic III is commonly purchased by our students.

Sphygmomanometer/Blood Pressure Cuff
Required: The Welch Allyn Durashock Aneroid (DS44-11C) is required.

Medical penlight ($3-$10)
Basic penlight

Reflex Hammer
Required: Tromner Reflex Hammer is required.

Tuning Forks (128Hz and 512Hz) ($5-$12)

Hand-held/Pocket Eye Chart ($2-$7)

Retractable Tape Measure ($3-$6)
Small, woven tape measure

Stop-watch or wrist watch with a second hand

Two (2) flexible rulers

We do not feel a group plan is necessary since we have significantly reduced your equipment costs due to the elimination of the otoscope and ophthalmoscope. The most expensive piece of equipment you need is a stethoscope and online prices are competitive and reasonable.

Medical equipment can be found at discounted rates through www.themedicalstore.biz. Our PA Program has partnered with this company to offer you potential savings. Search
for our program under the Schools/Organizations dropdown box (or mouse over CUSTOMERS tab and click ‘Enter School Code’).

Enter school code: pennpa2017

Requirements for Clinical Exposure to Patients:

Prior to having any patient contact, Penn State Physician Assistant students will have met the following requirements:

1. Completion of required immunizations and documentation of a recent history and physical examination verifying absence of communicable diseases.
2. Successfully submitted the criminal background check and child abuse registry (must be re-done prior to start of P2 year) by providing the PA State Clearance, the FBI fingerprint clearance, and the PA Child Abuse clearance. This information is sent to students prior to matriculation. We are currently contracted with Castle Branch for these services. Costs of obtaining these checks are the responsibility of the student.
3. Submit to yearly PPD testing with appropriate documentation. Some hospitals are now requiring a 2-step PPD test. If the student previously had a + PPD test, the student is required to have a chest x-ray verifying that the student is not a public health risk for spread of tuberculosis.
4. Documentation of successful completion of the OSHA blood borne pathogen tutorial provided by the College of Medicine.
5. Will have signed a form attesting to patient confidentiality and HIPAA matters.
6. Will wear a Penn State Hershey Medical Center/College of Medicine issued photo ID.
7. Will wear a Penn State College of Medicine short white jacket identifying the student as a Physician Assistant student.
8. Hershey Medical Center will offer influenza vaccinations to all of their students at no cost. Students who do not receive this vaccination will be required to wear masks for all patient encounters when influenza has been documented in Pennsylvania. Students who receive this vaccination will receive a sticker placed on their student identification card.

Classroom and Program Regulations

The PA Program at Penn State College of Medicine attempts to educate and train motivated, well-prepared students for their role as Physician Assistants. There are certain common sense guidelines for the Program that are in operation:

- The overriding core values of the College of Medicine are individual dignity, knowledge, service orientation, excellence, fiscal responsibility and diversity. The Program’s mission is consistent with these values, and our goal is to demonstrate these values by treating others in a humanistic manner. As a Program, we will attempt to show respect to students in the Program. We expect this respect to be mutually returned. Students are also expected to be respectful to one another.
• Students who need to speak with or forward a message to any program personnel are to contact the Program Administrative staff. The Administrative staff will handle all student inquiries and will contact the Program personnel in order to check for their availability.

• It is suggested that all students keep the class “Faculty & Staff Quick Contact List” available for reference at all times. There should be no excuse for not being able to contact a faculty or staff member at any time. Program personnel can be contacted by email or phone.

• Attendance policies for each course are outlined in each course syllabus. The general rule of the PA Program is that all students are expected to attend all scheduled Program classes and events. Students are not required to attend classroom lectures, but attendance is encouraged. If a student is unable to attend a required class or examination, he/she is expected to notify Program personnel (ext. 285595, or via email or voicemail to the Professor) at the earliest possible time. All make-up work is the responsibility of the student. The faculty will make every effort to help students who miss class due to an unavoidable absence. A note from the student’s licensed health care provider may be requested. Missed examinations will be made up at the discretion of the course instructor. The make-up examination may be a different format than the test originally administered.

• The PA Program has developed method(s) for properly submitting hand-written materials for grading. It is the responsibility of the individual student to follow this method. Students will also submit assignments through CANVAS, the Penn State academic management system. Information about CANVAS and other systems utilized in class will be given during the students' orientation. This protocol is especially important for SOAP notes and other time-sensitive assignments. It is each student’s responsibility to check their Penn State Hershey email regularly (at least three times daily) for notices that might pertain to him/her. Failure to meet a deadline could result in a deduction of points.

• The classroom is designed for a proper learning environment. Respect for the professor and for your fellow students is shown by raising your hand to ask questions or to provide answers during a class and by coming to class on time – not by talking out loud, making comments under your breath, or otherwise disturbing the class. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom, on campus, or in the clinical environment will not be tolerated. Students who violate this policy may be asked to leave the classroom and may have a Professionalism Evaluation Form completed in response to their behavior.

• Cell phones and pagers, if worn, should be kept on vibrate/silent mode. Experience has taught us that phones ringing and pagers beeping in the classroom are a disturbance. Cell phones or other communication devices are not permitted in the classroom during an exam.

• In emergency situations, the Program staff may be contacted to reach the student. Callers should use ext. 285595 (Program Administrative Staff).

• Students are permitted to use their own personal laptop computers. Since class time is approximately 8 hours per day, an extra battery would be a good idea. Although computers are readily available on campus and in the library, it is highly recommended that students have their own computer available for their use since multiple activities and course notes will necessitate computer access. Signing out University computers is on a first come, first serve basis and computers are never guaranteed to be available.
• ExamSoft is our assessment delivery system. Students will need to bring their computer with them for all scheduled examinations. During ExamSoft assessments, students are permitted to have a blank piece of scrap paper to draw diagrams, perform calculations, etc. Students must turn this scrap paper into the faculty at the conclusion of the assessment. Students are prohibited from writing down questions that are utilized on an assessment.

• ExamSoft assessments are timed and the program will end your assessment after the allotted time has expired. The time starts when the student enters the password for the assessment as provided by the Program Faculty/Staff. It is expected that the students arrive early with the exam pre-downloaded so that they can start immediately when the assessment password is provided. Continuing to study material after the password is provided is strictly prohibited. If an assessment is scheduled to last 60 minutes, faculty members will require students to end the assessment after 60 minutes even if they still have time on ExamSoft since it means that the student did not enter the password when it was provided. Students may be given the opportunity to review the examination either directly after submission or at a pre-determined time following the examination administration.

• The copy machine expenses are charged to the Program. Each instructor may supply written handouts as individually determined. The majority of lecture notes/PowerPoints will be available through CANVAS. Students who need additional copies for their own use are asked to use the other copy machines available on campus. The Program may allow certain notes to be copied in the event that a student misses class due to unforeseeable circumstances. If you missed receiving a handout for a class due to an absence, your copy should be available in the classroom when you return. (Enough copies are made for each member of the class.) If no copy is available, ask your classmates if anyone took the extra copy to hold for you OR if they just decided to take an extra copy. Office staff cannot make additional copies for a student without permission from the professor.

• The College of Medicine may cancel classes due to inclement weather. Information on these school cancellations and notification procedures are detailed on the Penn State web site (https://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/). Do not delay; instructions will be shared with you during orientation.

• If the PA Program believes that the traveling conditions are unsafe, it will utilize the PA Program “Rained Out” text alert system for implementation of an in-home study or review day. Students should not call the Program about these matters. Students will be notified by text message should the in-home review situation occur. You will be instructed to sign up for Campus Emergency Alerts and Rained Out PA Program alerts during student orientation. If classes are canceled on campus, PA classes may still be held through another media such as Adobe Connect or Mediasite. The students will be told what format the classes will be held.

• The PA Program sets its own calendar and does not necessarily follow the University’s calendar for the dates of the semesters. Both the pre-clinical and clinical education will begin with the summer semester. The summer schedule will be supplied as soon as it is available. The clinical year calendar is issued to the students prior to the start of the clinical phase of the program. Students are not to make plans to take vacations during any time when classes are scheduled to be in session or during scheduled rotation times.
• Plagiarism, cheating, and other illegal behaviors are subject to disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the Program. These will follow the established policies and procedures of Penn State University.

• As a Program, we are sensitive to the various problems that adult students may encounter. We will attempt to work with the students in order to ensure their success whenever such problems arise. Communication with the Program is necessary so that strategies for success can be formulated.

• A student MUST inform the Program Faculty present in the Simulation (SIM) Lab if the student has a known relationship with the standardized patient. In this event, the student must be reassigned.

• For students on clinical rotations, professional judgment is needed. It is common sense that if the preceptor is able to attend the practice, that the student should also be in attendance. If for any reason you are unable to attend the rotation (illness, poor driving conditions, etc.) it is your obligation and duty to notify the Program’s Clinical Coordinator and preceptor as soon as possible.

• On clinical rotations, students are permitted to have one sick day without penalty. If a student misses more than one day, the student will be required to make up all additional time from the rotation. If the site does not have extended or weekend hours, an alternative arrangement for making up this time will be arranged.

• During the clinical rotations, students will need to put requests for time off (for interviewing, etc.) in writing and receive prior approval from the program for this time off. Students may be required to make up this time away from the rotation. It is highly suggested that the student remember that his/her priority is becoming a health care provider and to appreciate the sacrifices that are involved with this educational process.

• ExamSoft examinations may be available for review during regular business hours in the Program office. Prior arrangements for reviewing incorrect answers from an assessment should be made with the course instructor and the program coordinator so that the assessment can be printed. These tests are never to leave the Program office and any type of reproduction of the material in any way is not allowed. If review of examination is due to a remediation, there may be some assignments as a result of this activity. Removal of the tests or duplication of the test questions (written typed, photographed, etc.) when reviewing the test constitutes inappropriate, unethical, and dishonest behavior, and the student may be sanctioned for this incident. Test review in the Program Office will be done under the supervision of a member of the staff. This staff member has the authority to act on the behalf of the PA Program and can attest to any irregular behavior that may occur. This test review time should be viewed as a learning activity rather than as a time to challenge the questions. Please refer to the course syllabus for faculty specific rules on examination reviews.

• You are permitted to challenge questions when referenced by one of our assigned textbooks for the respective course. Sometimes, test reviews will occur in our classroom. When a test review is performed in the classroom, students are not permitted to have notes or textbooks open during the test reviews. Abuse of this privilege may prohibit the involved person(s) or even the entire class from accessing the test materials in the future.
Some instructors will go over the test with the class as a whole during scheduled class time or at the end of the day (as announced with adequate warning). If a student does not attend the test review, the student should not expect the faculty member to individually review the examination at another time. Exceptions can be made on an individual basis which is determined by the reason as to why the student could not attend the test review.

Some examinations will have immediate test review with ExamSoft opening the examination after the test is submitted. If tests are reviewed during the class time, no notes or recordings are to be taken during the review. The program believes that allowing students access to their tests either as part of a test review or individually is an effective strategy for improving student mastery of the material by identifying what the student does not know and what the intended better solution to the question really is. Students can then reflect on this information following the review and can benefit from these activities.

If a student challenges a test question, the student should complete the exam question appeal form. The instructor from the course will review this rebuttal and will let the student know if an alternative answer is accepted. These forms are available in the Program office. These materials should be handed into the Program office as soon as the test review is performed. Students have one week after the test to complete the test rebuttal form. If an alternative answer is accepted, all of the tests will be rescored and adjustments made to the grade. ExamSoft has a feature which allows all of the tests to be adjusted in this manner.

If tests are reviewed during class time and a student is absent, it is up to the individual instructor to decide if the material is reviewed again with the student individually. If the student is absent for the class review, the student may forfeit his/her opportunity to review this material.

The PA Program will deliver some tests electronically via computerized testing. If these tests are delivered electronically, an announced time for test review under supervision of Program personnel will be announced with sufficient warning to allow students appropriate access to these examinations for enhanced student understanding.

There is a two-week limit to challenge test questions after the administration of the test. If additional answers are accepted by the program, all students will be awarded the points on the examination.

Once the clinical year begins, students are not permitted to access their tests from the preclinical portion of the curriculum. Additionally, tests given during the pre-clinical year will not be available after the semester ends. By appointment, students are permitted to review their clinical year tests throughout the clinical year, however. Arrangements should be made through the program.

Although grades will be posted on CANVAS, or sent to the student directly from ExamSoft, it is strongly suggested that students keep track of their test scores and if a student believes there is a discrepancy, the student must bring it to the attention of the instructor within two weeks of the original test date or review.

For financial aid purposes the student has 150% of their time to complete the program not counting periods of Leave of Absence (LOA). For PA students, the program is 6 semesters so they would have 9 semesters to complete the
program as long as they complete at least 67% of the credits that they take in any one semester.

- If a student must repeat a course or rotation in order to graduate from the program, student loans may not cover this expense and the student will have to find alternative financing for this activity. The University will determine the cost for courses that are being made up. If a student receives an “incomplete” grade, the student will need to make up the missed activities at the pre-determined timeframe in order to prevent this incomplete grade from transitioning into a failure for the course. Ordinarily, completing an “incomplete” course should not require additional financial costs to the student.

- Students should be engaged during all classroom activities. The program is allowing the students to take notes on computers during the lecture portion of the curriculum. If a student is found to have social media sites or other inappropriate material on his/her computer during the lecture, the teacher will close the student’s computer and the student will lose computer privileges for the remainder of the semester. This policy is in effect for all classroom activities.

**Work Policy:**

- The PA Program realizes that students have different financial obligations and may need to work while enrolled. The Program believes that we are educating adults who are capable of making a personal decision about the necessity of working. However, we fully expect the PA Program to be the student’s first priority. This Program will require a great deal of commitment to the Program on the part of the student. We do not encourage students to work, but we allow the students to make this personal decision. The student does not need to disclose to the program whether work is taking place. Students are not permitted to miss any scheduled assessments due to a work obligation.

- During the clinical phase of the program, the program will not allow the student to alter the rotation or site schedule to accommodate a working schedule. Students are reminded that the clinical rotation schedules may include night shifts and weekends as part of the learning experiences.

- Students are not permitted to work for the PA Program. As part of our learning in teams during the program, students may desire to host student discussion topics with their peers, but this is not required.

**Professionalism**

- Professionalism will be assessed and addressed every semester with each student in the Program. Students will be required to self-assess and reflect upon their professional behaviors and attitudes and will meet with a faculty member to share this evaluation.

- Professional behavior is expected for all students in the clinical and preclinical years. Students are being trained to function as professionals and are expected to act as such. Unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated and may be grounds for dismissal from the Program. The Program will follow the professionalism standard established by the College of Medicine. This professionalism standard emphasizes the humanistic side of interpersonal relationships.
• Mutual respect is expected from the faculty and students alike. Although we appreciate that there are inherent stresses within this educational process, we expect that you will conduct yourself as the ultimate professional. Students may be counseled when breeches in professional behavior occur, and these counseling sessions will be documented in the student file. Further unprofessional behavior or severe breaches of professionalism may require more severe sanctioning, including a letter from the Program or other sanctions including suspension and dismissal from the Program and/or University.

• Students are expected to dress professionally while on clinical rotations or when they have any professional encounters with patients. This professional dress should also occur when there are activities planned with standardized patients. Students naturally expect others to treat them with respect, and their dress should reflect this professional attitude.

• Dress in the Penn State classroom will consist of clothing that is not a distraction for others. Students may be brought to the office to discuss clothing or accessory choices when the program deems that discussion is warranted.

• Students will be provided with scrubs to wear when working in the multidisciplinary lab (MDL) for review of prosections and while performing cadaveric dissection. Students will be able to store their clothes in their lockers in order to make this exchange. Scrubs must be returned prior to receiving the next set. Student ID cards will be utilized to access these scrubs. Laundering of these scrubs will be done by the College of Medicine. Students MUST remove their scrubs immediately at the conclusion of the time spent in the MDL. There are several employees of Penn State Health and the College of Medicine who are extremely sensitive to the odor of formalin and you are therefore NOT allowed to remain in your scrubs that were worn while in the MDL.

• When performing the physical examination section of the history and physical examination courses, students should have appropriate dress. Full details of this requirement will be discussed with the faculty teaching those classes and this information will be placed on the course syllabi. Failure to have appropriate dress during testing of these physical examinations may result in a loss of points for those examinations.

• Professional attire is also required when the student attends a CME-sponsored event during their time as a student in the PA Program.

Confidentiality Statements: A statement verifying that the student will maintain confidentially related to patient matters must be completed by all Physician Assistant students prior to having contact with patients in a clinical setting. Patient confidentiality is a serious issue and violation of this standard may result in dismissal from the PA Program. The American Academy of Physician Assistants has issued a “Code of Ethics of the Physician Assistant Profession.” The following statement is extracted from this principle regarding patient confidentiality: “Physician Assistants shall uphold the doctrine of confidentiality regarding privileged patient information, unless required to release such information by law or such information becomes necessary to protect the welfare of the patient or community.”
HIPAA: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that all healthcare providers respect patient confidence and realizes that healthcare providers are given access to information that is highly confidential and personal. HIPAA mandates that the healthcare provider does not use his or her position as a healthcare provider to gain inappropriate access to these documents and mandates that patient information can only be released to others after consent is granted by the patient. HIPAA regulations include fines and/or prosecution for the organization and healthcare provider if information is disseminated without patient consent. HIPAA details common sense principles of not disclosing patient information and not accessing information about others that does not impact upon their current care. We are in full compliance with the federally-mandated HIPAA laws and students will be in-serviced about these regulations. Annual successful completion of the HIPAA training, as required by Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State Hershey Medical Center, will be documented in the student files. All clinical sites mandate that this training has taken place. Initial HIPAA training is conducted during student orientation.

For students attending clinical rotations, HIPAA is fully enforceable. Students should take every precaution in guarding patient information and should be aware that patient cases should not be discussed in public areas. When documenting student notes for the Program assignments, only initials, rather than actual patient names, should be used. Any identifying patient information should be blackened out prior to submitting these required notes.

Institutions hold patient privacy in high esteem. Students can be dismissed from the site and even dismissed from the program if they violate patient privacy. Students should not access patient files if they are not involved with the case and should not attempt to access files of people with whom they have no professional relationship. It is a privilege to be involved with health care and professionals and students should not abuse the privilege that they are given.

**Pre-Clinical and Clinical Education**

Each Phase of the Penn State PA Program consists of three semesters. Students will begin their studies during the summer semester every May with a specific date sent to the students soon after they deposit for the program. The fall semester will typically begin the day after the Labor Day holiday. The spring semester will begin in January, as announced in program data sheets. Semester in the pre-clinical training will range from 17-20 credits each semester. Students can plan on having scheduled classes from 8 AM to 5 PM daily. There should not be an expectation on any given day that class will be finished before 5 PM.

Following successful completion of the pre-clinical curriculum, the student will have a semester break followed by a one-week transition week of activities prior to the official start of the clinical training. This week will consist of orientation exercises for the clinical year along with review of the clinical year policies and procedures. During this time, students will also sit for the national in-training examination known as “PACKRAT” (Clinical Knowledge Rating Assessment Test). Students will have one-on-one student advising and professionalism reflection during this week of training. Further instruction on the patient electronic medical record will be provided along with motivational patient interviewing and reviews for billing/coding will also be provided. This week-long
transition week is not a graded activity but is mandatory for the student to complete prior to attendance of the clinical rotations.

Prior to the actual PACKRAT examination, the Program may administer a practice examination so that the students are prepared for the actual PACKRAT. This practice exam is intended to permit the students to have a gauge as to their own strengths and weaknesses. This test will also provide practice for time management skills for a long examination.

The PACKRAT examination will be paid for by the Penn State PA Program. This national examination must be taken by each student enrolled in the program but this is used for the student’s own evaluation for his/her strengths and weaknesses. There is no “passing” grade that must be achieved on this national standardized examination. The student can reflect on their performance on this examination and assess whether he/she is able to be academically successful on this type of examination. The Program believes that this examination is predictive for graduate performance on the national certifying examination so this is one way for students to form a perception as to how they could potentially perform on the national examination following completion of the Program.

The Program will analyze class performance on this examination in order to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the class as a whole. Since multiple publications have verified that this examination is predictive for board passage, we will use class grades in the content and subject areas as one data set for our program’s process improvement strategy.

The Clinical Phase of the PA Program consists of nine, five-week rotations. Mandatory rotations will consist of three in primary care (divided between internal medicine and family practice, and urgent care), emergency medicine, pediatrics, general surgery, mental health, and women’s health. There will be one elective rotation which the program will work with the student based upon the student’s interests and needs. A student can opt to complete his/her elective by second rotation of any of the mandatory rotations as well. Each five-week rotation will be awarded five credits. Therefore, the summer and fall semesters of the clinical year will be 15 credits, while the spring semester will include a 1-credit summative experience totaling 16 credits.

Consistent with ARC-PA requirements, the Penn State PA Program will have a graded summative experience as part of their graduation requirements. This one-credit course is delivered over a two-week period. The students will sit for the PACKRAT examination during this course, but the PACKRAT will not be utilized for grading or academic progression within the PA Program. One week of activity will consist of a board review for these students. The board review may also involve the taking of simulated examinations in various subject areas. Students are mandated to attend and participate in this board review as part of the summative experience.

The Summative Experience will consist of the following activities:
- Assessment of student knowledge with a 300 question summative test;
- “OSCE” - Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is an evaluation of a student’s communication skills, clinical knowledge base, and clinical skills. An
OSCE is performed as a clinical situation, where each student will interact with a standardized patient and within a specified amount of time is expected to:
- establish rapport with a patient
- obtain a patient’s history
- perform an appropriate physical exam
- develop a differential diagnosis
- write an assessment and management plan

The standardized patient is an actor/actress who is given a detailed script to perform for the scenario with the student. The standardized patient will be observing the student and detailing the student’s performance of various clinical skills. The PA faculty will determine if the student has achieved competence in the combined learning outcomes. OSCEs are recorded for the benefit of students and faculty. An 70% overall performance rating is required to pass an OSCE. The student will also need to receive an acceptable professionalism score from the standardized patient and faculty member to be considered as passing this activity.

- Demonstration of the applied clinical interpretative goals:
  - EKG interpretation;
  - Radiographic Interpretation;
  - Laboratory Studies interpretation;
  - Dermatologic condition interpretation;
  - Physical Examination findings interpretation;
  - Pharmacotherapeutics
  - ACLS Simulation and ACLS Emergency Management
- Discussion of medical ethic concepts;
- Patient education with Standardized patients while maintaining a professional demeanor;
- Performing management of emergency situations in the Simulation laboratory.
- Performance of technical procedures such as suturing and knot tying. Students may also need to demonstrate other basic skills such as Foley catheterization, venipuncture, arterial blood gases, and interosseous catheterization.

These students will also have a final, summative evaluation for professionalism. Student advising will be performed on an individual basis during these activities.

Students will be asked to complete a final exit survey with regard to their overall experience in the PA Program. This exit survey will be completed through Survey Monkey which will preclude any ability to identify the participant and will assure the student of anonymity. Students will be able to assess various elements of the program which will include:
- facilities and resources;
- technology support for program (academic management systems, AdobeConnect, MediaSite and other systems);
- faculty and staff;
- assessment strategies;
- teaching delivery systems (team-based learning, laboratory sessions, and traditional lectures)
- individual courses;
- clinical rotations, sites, and preceptors.
Upon completion of all graduation requirements, students will be included in the May College of Medicine Commencement Ceremony which is usually held annually on the third Sunday of May. This ceremony is held at the Milton Hershey School’s Founders Hall auditorium. Graduate degrees will be awarded as part of this ceremony.
Pre-Clinical Year Curriculum

**Summer Semester – 18 credits**

Applied Human Structure I and II ............................... PAS 701/PAS 702 / 4 credit(s)
Clinical Medicine I ................................................................. PAS 704 / 5 credit(s)
Pathophysiology I .................................................................. PAS 707 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacology I ..................................................................... PAS 710 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacotherapeutics I ........................................................ PAS 713 / 1 credit(s)
History and Physical Examination I ............................... PAS 716 / 2 credit(s)
US Health Care Systems and Legal Medicine ................ PAS 721 / 1 credit(s)
Laboratory Interpretive Methods ................................. PAS 724 / 1 credit(s)

**Fall Semester – 20 credits**

Applied Human Structure III ........................................ PAS 703 / 2 credit(s)
Clinical Medicine II ............................................................... PAS 705 / 5 credit(s)
Pathophysiology II ............................................................... PAS 708 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacology II ................................................................... PAS 711 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacotherapeutics II .................................................... PAS 714 / 1 credit(s)
History and Physical Examination II ............................... PAS 717 / 2 credit(s)
Evidence-Based Medicine .................................................. PAS 719 / 1 credit(s)
Behavioral Medicine .......................................................... PAS 723 / 1 credit(s)
Professional Practice ......................................................... PAS 725 / 1 credit(s)
EKG Interpretive Methods ................................................ PAS 728 / 1 credit(s)
Healthcare Ethics ............................................................... PAS 730 / 1 credit(s)
Radiology Interpreted Methods .................................. PAS 731 / 1 credit(s)

**Spring Semester – 17 credits**

Clinical Medicine III .......................................................... PAS 706 / 5 credit(s)
Pathophysiology III .............................................................. PAS 709 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacology III ................................................................. PAS 712 / 2 credit(s)
Pharmacotherapeutics III ................................................ PAS 715 / 1 credit(s)
History and Physical Examination III ............................ PAS 718 / 2 credit(s)
Pediatric Studies ................................................................. PAS 720 / 1 credit(s)
Women’s Studies ................................................................. PAS 722 / 1 credit(s)
Advanced Cardiac Life Support ....................................... PAS 726 / 1 credit(s)
Clinical Skills ................................................................. PAS 727 / 1 credit(s)
Emergency Studies .......................................................... PAS 729 / 1 credit(s)
### Clinical Year Curriculum

#### Mandatory Rotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine I</td>
<td>PAS 732</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine I (HMC)</td>
<td>PAS 734</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery I</td>
<td>PAS 737</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine I (Inpatient)</td>
<td>PAS 739</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health I</td>
<td>PAS 741</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics I</td>
<td>PAS 743</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Health I</td>
<td>PAS 745</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine III/Family Medicine III</td>
<td>PAS 747/748</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Elective                                           | PAS 7XX  | 5       |
| Summative Experience                               | PAS 756  | 1       |

*Students must take three primary care mandatory rotations in the area of family practice and internal medicine.*

#### Elective Rotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiology</td>
<td>PAS 760</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>PAS 755</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine II (Ambulatory Care)</td>
<td>PAS 735</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine III (Ambulatory Care/Urgent Care)</td>
<td>PAS 748</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medicine II</td>
<td>PAS 733</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrinology</td>
<td>PAS 749</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT</td>
<td>PAS 751</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery II</td>
<td>PAS 738</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hematology/Oncology</td>
<td>PAS 752</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine II</td>
<td>PAS 740</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine III</td>
<td>PAS 747</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventional Radiology</td>
<td>PAS 757</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health II</td>
<td>PAS 742</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedics &amp; Sports Medicine</td>
<td>PAS 753</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics II</td>
<td>PAS 744</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>PAS 754</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Health II</td>
<td>PAS 746</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The Summative Experience must be successfully completed as one of the final requirements for program completion. The Summative Experience is a pass/fail class. The summative experience includes assessments which allow the student to demonstrate proficiency and clinical skills along with a week-long activity for board review prior to completion of the program (additional Summative information on beginning on page 40).

• Each rotation consists of a 5-week block that takes place at various locations both in the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and the surrounding area, when necessary. During the pre-clinical training, students will be surveyed for their preferences regarding rotational sites, but the PA Program retains the authority to assign sites as it deems necessary. A student may identify a site for the elective rotation on his/her own, subject to approval by the Program. Students who wish to establish an elective site should contact the clinical coordinator in order to fill out the appropriate paperwork and to determine the feasibility of such a site. If a student is on academic probation/warning, the program reserves the right to assign the elective rotation for the student for his/her best interest. Specific information regarding this procedure will be discussed in this document.

Elective Rotations:
• Students may request a rotation outside of our geographic area. Students who request a rotation outside of the geographic area are responsible for finding housing on their own in this situation. The Program will attempt to aid students in the procurement of housing, but ultimately, the student is responsible. Some of the sites will have student housing available, either at no cost or low cost, and this information will be given to the students prior to choosing their rotational sites. This housing may be available if the student rotates at one of the federally identified health care shortage areas.

• The Program is capable of placing all of the students at all of the rotational sites, both elective and mandatory. If a student has a special desire to perform an elective rotation of his/her own choosing, the student can contact the clinical coordinator to discuss this potential site. The student will need to provide information about the potential site prior to the meeting with the clinical coordinator. The clinical coordinator will contact the clinical site to ascertain the interest, understanding, and qualifications for this potential preceptor along with finding out the potential placement of the student at a hospital (if the preceptor wants the student to accompany him/her to the hospital). Affiliation agreements may need to be procured for the clinical preceptor and health care facility and failure of the affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding to be executed may result in the inability of the student to be placed at this clinical rotation.

• At this time, we are not offering full rotations outside of the United States. There is a great deal of time and effort in developing rotations outside of the United States and this may include obtaining special malpractice insurance policies for students who are attending sites outside of the United States (may not be possible to offer malpractice insurance coverage for some of these sites). The Program is working with the College of Medicine’s Global Outreach Project for short-term experiences but at this point in the Program’s development, there are no fully established five-week rotations.
Rotation Learning and Performance Expectations:

- Expectations for the clinical sites and primary and secondary objectives for the rotations are specifically listed under each rotation.
- There will be a separate Clinical Rotation Manual which will detail certain information about the clinical year rotations. The manual lists the grading system, absentee policy, dress code policy, and a troubleshooting guide for students while they are on their clinical sites.
- Students will be given information regarding each clinical site prior to starting the rotation. Guidelines for the calculation of grades and Call-Back Day schedules are listed in the Clinical Rotation Manual.
- This manual will provide students with a required textbook and reading list for each rotation. MED-U will also be part of the assigned coverage material. End of rotation examinations (EOR) will have questions specifically referenced to the assigned reading from the required textbook and MED-U. We believe that writing the tests from material contained on the reading list for each rotation will permit the student to be successful on these examinations provided that they have read, reflected, and understood the material covered in their assigned readings. Topic areas listed on the rotational objectives also need to be reviewed as part of the preparation for these end of rotation examinations and other assessments utilized for the call back days.
- Students on clinical rotations are NEVER permitted to substitute for clinical or administrative staff during these clinical rotations. If students are asked to serve in this capacity, students are requested to notify the Clinical Coordinator or PA Program immediately. Preceptors and clinical sites are informed about this policy and students should never be placed in this situation.
- At the completion of the fifth week of the rotation, students are required to return the student evaluation form from the preceptor when they return to campus on the Call-Back Day at the completion of their rotation. Call Back Day will involve the student taking the end-of-rotation examination for all mandatory rotations plus one of the following: a physical examination practicum based upon a case presentation, an oral examination, or an oral case presentation and paper. Since one activity is performed during each of the three Call Back Days per semester, the student will rotate in his/her requirements on a per semester basis.

Grading During the Clinical Year:

- The final grades for each of the rotations will consist of the following:
  - 40% for end of rotation examination;
  - 30% for preceptor evaluation of student;
  - 10% for grading of submitted history and physical examination;
  - 5% for completion of required paperwork that meets the program deadline
  - 5% for completion of Spaced Education questions
  - 10% for Call-Back Day Testing Activity (directed practical examination, oral examination, or case/paper presentation or presentation of community project during one of the AHEC Primary Care Clinical Rotations).
  - For students on elective rotations, the student will have an option to sit for an examination or to write 10, one-page referenced papers on a topic pertinent to the rotation that they are attending. If students request the examination, they need to notify the program prior to the start of the
clinical rotation so that adequate time is given for building this test. Students will be given instruction regarding preparation for this exam.

Health Insurance
- The PA Program and the College of Medicine realize that health profession students may contact patients who are ill and may be at increased risk for becoming ill as a result of this contact. Per PA Program and College of Medicine requirements, the student will maintain personal health insurance while enrolled in the PA Program.
- A limited health insurance policy is provided by the University (at the student’s expense) if the student cannot provide proof of insurance coverage.

Malpractice Coverage
- The College of Medicine mandates that each student have malpractice insurance for any student having patient contact during enrollment in the PA Program. Each student is responsible for purchasing their malpractice coverage on an annual basis. Information regarding these policies will be maintained by the program and will be sent to each preceptor prior to students beginning their clinical year.
- Currently, there is a malpractice carrier which offers students malpractice coverage without charge. This company meets the minimum requirements for coverage and students can opt for this coverage after reading the company’s policies for coverage.
- The malpractice coverage will be consistent with the amount of coverage that is needed in Pennsylvania.
- This malpractice coverage will not need a tail after the student graduates which is typical for student malpractice coverage.
- It is important for the students to inform the program if there are any negative outcomes or events (reportable incidents) during a clinical encounter. Malpractice carriers wish to be contacted as soon as possible so that an investigation can be initiated. If the student is concerned about a particular incident with regard to notification to the insurance carrier, the student can notify the Program for advice about what could be done.

Preceptor Information
- Prior to student arrival, preceptors are sent a packet of information about the student. This information serves as an introduction of the student and also provides the necessary information for safe practice at the site.
- Students will complete a form about themselves talking about their previous academic experiences (colleges attended, majors, clubs and organizations, special interests) and clinical experiences (how they obtained their necessary hours) along with information about their educational aspirations and goals.
- Students must agree to supply this general information to the Program and must have their picture taken so that this information can be sent to preceptors prior to the student arriving on site. The picture is necessary in order to prevent fraud in the clinical setting. Students will also be required to wear their Program-issued student identification badges which also contain their pictures for further verification.

Senior Summative Experience
The Senior Summative Experience is a requirement of the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). It is conducted prior
to program completion to assure that students meet defined program expectations for knowledge and technical skills.

This summary evaluation of students includes a written examination, clinical case problems, direct supervision of technical procedure performance (as verified by the Program’s Procedural Checklist and testing stations), oral examinations, performance of complete and directed physical examinations, performance of suturing and knot tying, and interpretation of diagnostic laboratory tests, x-rays, dermatology, and electrocardiograms, along with assessment of basic science knowledge and ability to perform patient education. Students will also have an opportunity to treat emergency situations via the use of the Simulation Center technology.

Students have been informed of the technical standards for the Penn State Physician Assistant Program. These technical standards are assessed through this summative experience. This ARC standard is based upon the necessity of the program director signing off of the competence of all students completing the PA Program training. Many states allow PA Practice on a temporary basis prior to becoming nationally certified. As a duty to protect the public from unsafe health care providers, program directors are now required to sign off on successful program completion verifying that the student has the competency, professionalism and clinical skills to perform as a graduate of this physician assistant program.

The written examination consists of 300 multiple choice questions based upon program learning outcomes and objectives. This assessment has been written by PA educators who are very familiar with the type and complexity of the questions that are expected of physician assistant students who are completing their training. Some students may want to practice for a comprehensive test via use of Exam Master which is available to all of our students via the Harrell Library Site.

Specific instructions regarding the format of the test will be given to the students during the program. A grade of 70% must be earned or the student will not be permitted to graduate from the program. If a student does not pass this comprehensive examination, remediation will take place and the student will be afforded one additional opportunity to achieve the 70% on the make-up examination. No student will graduate from this program unless this examination is successfully completed. Failure to pass the remediation assessment will make the student ineligible for graduation.

All aspects of the Senior Summative Experience may be remediated, with the details of this remediation based upon each of the skills stations. Students will be given assistance in overcoming their deficiencies. Students will not graduate until they successfully complete all aspects of the Senior Summative Experience. Graduation may be held until the student completes all remediation and meets the program expectation for each of the testing stations.

Following completion of this portion of the Summative Experience, the students will be provided with a board review in preparation for their national board examination. This week long event will consist of both lecture material and practice examinations in order for the student to gain insight into his or her deficiencies in preparing for the national certification examination.
Continuing Program Evaluation
To ensure the success of the program and the provision of the type of education to which the program is committed, the evaluation of both the process and the outcomes of the academic program will be regularly and systematically assessed. The main outcome of this assessment to develop is a graduate who will have achieved the academic program objectives. The process includes the curriculum design, course methodologies, recruitment and teaching, policies and procedures.

The objectives encompass PA practice and medical knowledge, skills and attitudes. The assessment of knowledge takes place at several stages in the process - each semester as students complete their work, during clinical rotations, and following graduation. Faculty and staff review test materials to assure correlation with the learning objectives. Annual statistical review of the grades of individual students and the class as a whole will allow the department to identify knowledge areas which may need more attention, reinforcement, or a different approach to course organization.

Students are able to assess the courses using a standardized College of Medicine course assessment form and occasionally a physician assistant specific course evaluation form. During the pre-clinical phase of the program, this information is transmitted to the faculty for refinement of their course. The course evaluation materials are given to the faculty with no student identifiers after course grades have been submitted to the registrar.

Students are given an opportunity to provide feedback on their clinical rotations and clinical preceptors as it relates to the knowledge acquired in their professional years. Students' opinions are valued as to how the rotations have enhanced their medical knowledge. The clinical coordinator assembles this information and transmits it back to the faculty for review.

Fair Practices
The Pennsylvania State University and Penn State College of Medicine does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, handicap, or sexual preference.

Graduation Requirements
Requirements for graduation are formulated by the College of Medicine and are strictly adhered to by the Physician Assistant Program.

Graduation Requirements for the Physician Assistant Students include the following:
- Satisfactorily completing all requirements in the specified curriculum and in good academic standing;
- Attainment of good professional standing;
- Enrollment in the program for the time period specified by the professional accrediting body, if applicable;
- Successful passage of a summative experience and final evaluation;
- Recommendation for graduation by the faculty of the specific program and the general faculty;
• Satisfaction of all financial obligations to Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine and Penn State University.

• Follow the approved course of study, satisfactorily completing all courses within the professional component;

• Complete all courses with a cumulative 3.00 average, with no course or rotation below a “C” or “low pass.” A grade of “F” in any course or rotation does not meet this standard. Students can appeal to repeat any failed course and the program has the discretion as to how (and if) the student is permitted to retake this course. The program may require that the student step out of the program for up to one year – the time at which the course is repeated.

• Repeat, as approved, and earn a minimum grade of “C” for any required course or rotation in the program for which a grade of “F” was earned;

The grading of our courses is consistent with the grading utilized in the College of Medicine and all 700 level courses at Penn State University. The following lists the final course grade, the translated GPA grade, and the quality point assignment to this course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>INTERNAL LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>INTERNAL RANGE</th>
<th>INTERNAL QP EARNED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pass</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-92%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-86%</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pass</td>
<td>LP</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>FAIL</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤69 %</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Academic Requirements**

**Academic Progress**

The Physician Assistant Program at Penn State College of Medicine is a full-time academic program. Advanced placement in the professional phase is not possible. There is no credit awarded for experiential learning. The courses are completed in sequence as listed in the above curriculum. Sufficient academic progress is needed to maintain academic standing and financial aid eligibility within the PA Program. All courses in the professional phase of the program are at the graduate level. Grades for graduate courses typically may be awarded as letter grades or qualitatively as honors, high pass, pass, low pass, or fail which translates into letter grades. Failure to achieve at least a “B” (or pass) for each individual course may place the student at risk for making sufficient academic progress. A 3.0 overall GPA is needed for graduation from this program.

• Each course listed in the curriculum is a required course. All required courses need a minimum of a “C” (or low pass) grade at the completion in order to graduate from the PA Program. Any course or rotation with a final grade below a “C” (or low pass) needs to be successfully repeated by the student with at least a “C” grade (low pass)
on the repeated course in order to graduate. Consistent with Medical School policy, for courses that are repeated, the repeated grade that is earned will be used in the determination of the GPA.

- Three courses in the pre-clinical curriculum are given as a “pass/fail” grading scale. These courses are Ethics of Health Care (PAS 730), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (PAS 726), and Evidence-Based Medicine (PAS 719). These courses must be assigned as a “pass” in order for the student to meet graduation requirements. If a student does not meet the standard for passing he/she may need to either remediate until a “pass” is achieved or repeat this course, at the discretion of the program. Each course syllabus will provide details regarding passing requirements.

- Each student is required to meet with their advisor to discuss academic performance and professional behavior at least once per semester. These meetings typically are held at the midpoint of each of the semesters. Improvement strategies are discussed at the meeting with the student in order to help the student succeed in these courses. Strategies for academic performance used in the past have included group review sessions, tutoring, audio taping of the courses, and/or having an assigned note-taker.

- Grades for each course in the curriculum are available on the Academic Management System (CANVAS) or through ExamSoft.

- The Summative Experience course in the clinical curriculum is also a “pass/fail” course which will need to be passed in order for the student to graduate from the PA Program.

Remediation Policy

- Students are required to follow the program’s remediation policy. If a student fails to achieve at least a 70% on any test in the curriculum, the student will need to complete remediation. For students in the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum, they will need to personally meet with the instructor of the course to discuss the reasons as to why they did not meet the academic requirements of the program. This can involve discussion of improvement strategies, reviewing the test on an individual basis, or being given an assignment to complete in order to meet the program’s academic requirements. Students will often be given their examination that was not passed and will discuss all missed questions. For tests that have a high number of students failing to meet program requirements, group remediation may also be performed at a pre-announced time. The Program tracks all remediation requirements as part of their overall program assessment.

- The program compiles a list of students who need to remediate any given examination and it is the responsibility of the student to contact the course instructor (or his/her liaison) to schedule this remediation activity. Final grades may be withheld until the student completes the remediation that is acceptable to the PA faculty member.

- For the Team-Based Learning Individual Readiness Assurance Test (IRAT), students need to achieve a quiz score of at least 70%. Since the GRAT (Group Readiness Assurance Test) activity allows the group to find out and discuss the correct answers, a student is able to have this remediation employed by the group as long as the group quiz grade is at least a 70%.

- If a student fails to achieve at least a 70% on an examination during the clinical phase of the PA Program, the program will supply a formal list of remediation questions that need to be completed prior to the next senior day. These remediation
questions will be based upon the intent of the question that was missed. Students will need to reference the answers to these learning objectives.

Financial Aid Progression:
- Consistent with federal legislation, the College of Medicine has a formal financial aid policy with regard to sufficient academic progress in the PA Program. If a student fails to make sufficient academic progress in the PA Program, the student’s financial aid packages may be affected. If the student fails the government or program’s guidelines for sufficient academic progress, the student may lose eligibility for student loans. Information about this policy is available through the financial aid office.
- For students failing to achieve sufficient academic progress during the clinical phase of the PA Program, official policies are in place to aid the student during their training.
- The PA Program is working with student services in order to allow each student to have an in-person counseling session regarding financial planning and debt payback during program attendance.

Academic Probation and Policies
- In order to remain in acceptable academic standing in the PA Program, the student needs to achieve a 3.00 GPA in each and every semester. Grades that are awarded qualitatively will be translated into a numeric score to determine whether the 3.0 GPA is met. The first occurrence in which the required 3.00 is not met in any individual semester will result in PA Program Academic Probation. The next occurrence in which the 3.00 is not achieved in any subsequent semester will result in academic dismissal from the Penn State College of Medicine Physician Assistant Program. This 3.00 average will be evaluated on a per semester basis. If a student is placed on academic probation for a single semester, the student does NOT need to meet the 3.0 cumulative GPA until the program is completed. Students must achieve an overall GPA of 3.00 in order to graduate from the program.
- Students who are on academic or disciplinary probation may have conditions of their probation listed on their probation letter. These conditions may include (list is not meant to be all-inclusive) mandatory class attendance, mandatory tutoring, mandatory meeting with faculty and/or program director on regularly scheduled meetings, additional assignments and/or remediation strategies in order to make improvements in their classroom and/or clinical settings.
- Students who are on academic probation may be required to attend their elective clinical rotation, as chosen by the PA program. The PA program may have the best perspective for the student when choosing the elective rotation. Although a student may be interested in having a subspecialty elective, the program may instead have the student attend a broader rotation that will enhance foundational and general learning which would better prepare the student to meet the program outcomes and competencies. A general rather than a specialty rotation would also better prepare for the topics that the student is going to see on the national certification examination.
- A student retains the right to appeal an academic dismissal or probation to the PA Academic Appeals Committee. All appeals must be made in writing.
- No Physician Assistant student will graduate from the University unless the overall 3.00 minimum GPA is achieved. Other conditions for successful program completion are listed in this student handbook.
Grades

- The overall GPA will be a determining factor for conflicts over a clinical preceptorship or elective rotation. Some of our elective rotations may have more students wishing to attend the site than can be accommodated. For rotations such as these, the student’s academic and professional performance in the Program will be a deciding factor as to who is awarded these sites.

Appeals Policy

- Students who want to appeal a grade are advised to follow the established policies. The first appeal is to the faculty member awarding the grade. The next appeal is to the Program Director. The next appeal is to the Medical Director who is also the de facto chair of Academic Appeals Committee. The Academic Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the Vice Dean for Academic Education.

Student Advising and Academic Support

- Each student is assigned a full-time faculty member as an advisor. Each student is required to meet with his/her advisor or a faculty representative at least once every semester. This system allows students to discuss any problems that he/she is experiencing and the advisor is able to offer strategies to deal with these difficulties. Additionally, faculty are available on campus to meet with students as the need arises. If the student fails to meet with his/her faculty advisor during the pre-clinical phase of the PA program, the student will be counseled for this breach in professionalism. More information about the advising program is discussed subsequently in this document.

- Students are required to bring their self-assessment professionalism form to these advisor meetings since professional behavior is something that will be discussed during this meeting. As professional graduate students, it is important for the student to reflect upon how he/she is being perceived by others as a result of their behavior and attitude.

- Penn State College of Medicine’s Student Support Center is also available for developing learning strategies for students who are experiencing difficulties. The students are also encouraged to study in groups and are able to utilize the multiple small group classrooms that are available throughout campus.

- Students should also approach their instructor(s) in order to help to develop strategies for improving their performance in various classes.

- The Student Support Center will also be able to help to determine potential accommodations for students who have a documented learning disability. Please contact this division as early as possible so that the student can be evaluated and plans can be formulated.

Professionalism:

- Students who are viewed to have a breach in program policies or exhibit behavior that is deemed to be unprofessional may have completion of the professionalism form. Students will be counseled for this professionalism breach and students will meet with the medical director to discuss this behavior. Students who have a second professionalism form completed about them will need to meet with the academic progress and professionalism committee.
Academic Progress Committee (APC) and Professionalism Committee
The APC is composed of program faculty and administrative representatives. At the end of each semester and, as necessary, the APC reviews the academic record of each graduate student to determine his/her academic standing. Records for any student who has failed to maintain good academic standing will be reviewed in detail and discussed by the APC. Recommendations regarding academic standing may include academic probation, probationary leave, remediation, deceleration, and dismissal from the program will be formulated by the APC. The student will be apprised of his/her academic standing. The letter informing the student of this decision will be copied to the student’s advisor and the financial aid office. A copy of this letter will also be placed in the student’s file (may be in an electronic format). Letters which dismiss the student from the PA Program will also be sent to the registrar and Vice-Dean for Medical Education. Decisions which are based upon grades earned in the program are automatically generated if the student fails to meet the semester GPA of 3.0. The student may request, within 7 days of receipt of the letter, a reconsideration of the decision by submitting a request in writing to the Program Director. The student may be extended an opportunity to present his or her case to the APC. The decision of reconsideration will be submitted to the student in writing. Any student may appeal the final decision of the program in writing to the Vice-Dean within 10 calendar days of the program decision. The decision of the Vice-Dean is final.

Academic Progress Guidelines
Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program are required to comply with all policies set forth by the Penn State College of Medicine and the Physician Assistant Program.

All students will be assigned to a faculty member who will serve as their academic advisor. Students are responsible for assuring that they meet all academic progress guidelines. Students are required to meet at least once every semester with his or her academic advisor and utilize this valuable resource when appropriate to support successful completion of the program curriculum and professional development. Detailed guidelines governing academic standing and dismissal have been delineated for the PA student as follows:

- A student who achieves an academic semester or cumulative GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. The Academic Progress Committee (APC) will make specific recommendations to the Program Director who has final authority on academic progress. A second occurrence of academic probation in any subsequent semester will result in academic dismissal from the PA Program.
- Any student who earns a course grade less than 2.5 (low pass) in any curriculum course at the end of the academic semester must repeat the class in order to be eligible for graduation. Each class in the curriculum is only offered once per year which would necessitate that the student will need to wait until the class is offered the following year. This may delay graduation for the student, depending on when the course is being repeated. Remediation for these courses may also be employed with these decisions being made on an individual basis.
- Students who are on academic probation during their training will remain on academic probation until completion from the PA Program.
- Ordinarily, academic probation is only awarded once during the program.
• Breaches in professional behavior may affect a clinical course grade and this could result in academic probation. Such matters will be handled according to academic policies and procedures.
• The academic progress committee will act according to the student’s appeal and will act in the best interest of the student, the PA Program, and the Penn State College of Medicine. The PA Program appreciates the commitment that each student has and the sacrifices that each student makes in becoming a physician assistant and the academic progress committee will therefore make every effort to support these students in their academic and professional development. Accordingly, the PA Program does establish the standards to which students must attain and expects the students to be committed to the PA Program. The PA Program will support the educational and professional efforts for the students but the student is ultimately responsible for meeting these standards.
• Any student who earns a course grade less than 2.5 (low pass) in two or more courses while enrolled in the PA program is at risk for not completing the Program.
• Progression into the clinical year is contingent upon the student’s being in good academic and professional standing. Students who do not meet these conditions will undergo review by APC who will make recommendations to the Program Director.
• A student who earns a failing (F) course grade in any clinical rotation will undergo review by the Academic Progress Committee and may face dismissal from the program depending on the circumstances regarding this failing grade.

Professional Conduct
Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of an institution of higher education and are required to abide by the highest codes of academic honesty, ethical fitness and professional conduct. Students are expected to abide by the standards established by the Penn State Physician Assistant Program, the Penn State College of Medicine, the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, and the Pennsylvania State University.

Characteristics key to the development of a health care professional include, but are not limited to:
• Ethical conduct and honesty
• Integrity
• Ability to recognize one’s limitations and accept constructive criticism
• Concern for oneself, others, and the rights of privacy
• Appropriate value judgment with respect to interpersonal relationships with peers, superiors, patients and their families
• Responsibility to duty
• An appearance consistent with a health care professional
• Punctual attendance at all program scheduled activities and adherence to deadlines set by the faculty and preceptors

The PA Program faculty meets regularly to discuss students’ professional development and to evaluate their progress. Any behaviors that call into question professionalism will be referred to the APC for review. The APC will make necessary recommendations for
further action, if warranted, to the Vice Dean. The Vice Dean will make the final determination regarding the student’s standing. This decision may include dismissal from the PA Program.

**Dress Code**

Students must remember that Penn State College of Medicine and the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center are professional institutions, and as such, it is expected that students display an appropriate level of judgment with regard to personal hygiene, grooming and dress. Additional requirements may be imposed in laboratory settings or patient care areas. Please avoid heavy fragrances, perfumes or colognes which may be offensive to peers and precipitate or aggravate unpleasant symptoms in patients encountered in patient care settings.

For anatomy dissection laboratory sessions, students will be issued scrubs to wear and the procedure for obtaining and returning these scrubs will be provided during the anatomy class. Laundering of these scrubs will be done by Hershey Medical Center upon return of these scrubs. Please refer to previous section about policy on changing out of used scrubs. The PA Program will issue a short white coat to the student during the White Coat Ceremony. In the clinical setting where patients are being seen, a dress code will be enforced. Interaction with standardized patients also requires that the student dress in professional attire. In this clinical setting, the student is expected to dress professionally along with wearing of their white coat. Preceptors may ask the student to alter their dress for certain clinical rotations and students are expected to comply with the directive from their preceptor.

At no time will the following items of clothing, or clothing style, be acceptable for PA students in the classroom or in clinical training areas:

- Wearing hats, caps or other head wear in the building*
- Wearing sunglasses in the building*
- Fish-net (stockings/hosiery) and other see-through clothing
- Crop tops and other bare midriff tops including spaghetti strap blouses
- Short shorts
- Athletic-type, wide-armhole tank tops that expose chest, back or midsection
- Any clothing with holes and cuts (i.e. jeans, shirts, tops, etc.)
- Bare feet
- Suggestive, revealing or tight fitting clothing, or clothing with inappropriate pictures or slogans
- Pants worn below the waistline and/or dragging the floor
- Wrinkled, dirty or unsafe attire
- Extreme personal presentation of any type (e.g. body piercing, hair style, tattoos)

*Wearing these items for medical or religious reasons is acceptable.

The following guidelines are to ensure a consistent and standardized image for all students encountering patients and their families, faculty, visitors, and peers. Our appearance communicates how we feel about the work we do and the College of Medicine. Professional appearance shall project competency, inspire confidence, and communicate respect to your peers, faculty, clinical year preceptors, patients, and
special guests. We are also aware of the additional expense that dressing up requires and at this time, we are not enforcing professional dress for the classroom activities during the pre-clinical training.

Criminal Background Check Policy

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and our Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) has recommended that medical schools and physician assistant programs conduct criminal background checks on their students prior to their clinical contact with patients. In order to conform with the AAMC and PAEA recommendations and existing hospital requirements, we will require Criminal Background Checks (CBC) for our accepted students, as well as our students entering their clinical year. Information regarding these checks is sent to all incoming students and again prior to clinical year.

Preceptors and hospitals often have a requirement for these clearances to be done prior to allowing students to have any contact with patients. A packet of student information is sent to clinical preceptors and hospitals and this packet will contain information regarding student criminal background clearances. Therefore, we require our rising second year PA students to repeat these Criminal Background checks. As part of the application process, students are told that they must disclose any previous criminal activity and falsification of this information may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

All Criminal Background Check requirements will be initiated through a Penn State Physician Assistant Student portal in partnership with Castle Branch. This will offer the most secure and user-friendly way for students to initiate and maintain their background check documents, and other documents such as health and immunization forms via the student portal, as well as provide a secure and confidential method for the program to review any records or results that arise from these checks.

Prior to matriculation, each student is instructed to visit the PA Student portal within Castle Branch. Students who have questions about this process should contact Caryn Stopper, Director of Admissions.

The following clearances must be completed in advance of both pre-clinical and clinical years.

1. Pennsylvania Criminal History (PATCH)
2. Child Abuse History Clearance
3. Federal Criminal History/Fingerprinting via Cogent

The cost of required criminal background checks for both years is at the expense of the student.

Any criminal background check record or result is subject to review and could result in dismissal or removal from the program. The procedure for reviewing background check records is maintained in the PA Office and can be viewed upon request.
Drug Testing Policy

Penn State College of Medicine’s Physician Assistant Program prides itself on having professional and competent students. Pursuant to this goal, students will be held to the standard of not being an impaired provider. It is the expectation that students will not be under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs while attending clinical rotations. The scent of alcohol on the breath while at a clinical site will also not be tolerated.

The following policy will be enforced for all students in the professional phase of the PA program:

The Program Director, clinical preceptors, faculty, and the Clinical Coordinator reserve the right to request a drug screen when drug or alcohol use is suspected by the Program staff or the preceptor. If the preceptor suspects illicit use, he/she will contact the program immediately. In addition, many hospitals and offices require drug screening prior to doing a rotation in their facility. Students should be prepared for drug testing at any point in their training and must comply when a test is requested. Failure to obtain drug testing when requested will be interpreted in the same manner as a positive drug test and sanctions for these positive tests can include dismissal from the PA Program.

The PA Program has partnered with Castle Branch to initiate, collect and share drug screening tests and test results. Details are available at the PA Program office. This drug testing often requires an appointment. This appointment could be scheduled on the same day as the suspected incident, especially if alcohol use is suspected. If the student does not go for testing at the appointed time, the student’s test results will be considered a positive drug screen or positive for alcohol, even if the screening process was not completed.

The results will be interpreted and the report will be sent to the Program via Castle Branch. A positive drug test which is not related to a legally prescribed therapy drug will result in immediate dismissal from the PA Program.

If the student is on a prescribed substance, he/she must immediately provide documentation from their licensed health care provider that there is a medical necessity for the medication. Despite a medical necessity for taking this medication, the student may not be able to attend a clinical site if this medication impairs the ability of the student to appropriately function. Students may be pulled from their clinical sites if the program makes a determination that they are not able to safely function in this clinical setting. Students are able to request a medical leave of absence if they believe that a medical condition would prohibit them from appropriately functioning in their role as a student health care provider.

The cost of the drug screen test is at the student’s expense. Penn State College of Medicine’s Physician Assistant Program will not be held liable for a student’s dismissal or inability to obtain a state license as the result of a positive drug screen or noncompliance with statutes regarding impaired provider performance.

Students will be provided with information regarding impaired provider networks available to them as students during the student orientation program.
The Penn State College of Medicine follows the same guidelines and policies enforced by the Pennsylvania State University noted below in Appendix A of the Penn State System-Wide ATOC Policies.

**Technical Standards: Minimum Abilities**

The abilities listed below are needed by all students in the physician assistant program. While admission decisions do not take disabilities into consideration, nor are applicants asked to disclose a disability, all persons interested in entering this health profession education program should be aware of minimum abilities required for success.

- Ability to make proper assessments and lawful judgments regarding health care.
- Ability to prioritize and carry out interventions.
- Ability to adapt to a variety of patient/client situations, including crises.
- Ability to communicate effectively.
- Ability to obtain, interpret and document data.
- Ability to measure outcomes of patient care.
- Ability to participate in discussion in the classroom, in the clinical arena, and with colleagues/patients/clients/or the public.
- Ability to acquire information developed through classroom instruction, clinical experiences, independent learning, and consultation.
- Ability to complete reading assignments and to search and evaluate literature.
- Ability to complete examinations electronically and manually.
- Ability to complete written assignments and maintain written records.
- Ability to solve problems.
- Ability to perform duties while under stress.
- Ability to meet deadlines and to manage time.
- Ability to complete computer-based assignments, and use the computer for searching, recording, storing, and retrieving information.
- Ability to complete assessment examinations.

These abilities may be accomplished through direct student response, through use of prosthetic devices, or through personal assistance (e.g. readers, signers, note takers, etc.). The responsibility for the purchase of prosthetic devices serving a student in meeting the above required abilities remains with the student and/or the agency supporting the student. The university will assist with providing note takers, readers, signers, and other attending services.

**Division Minimum Skills for Eligibility to Participate in Educational Programs and Activities**

The following are skills needed by matriculation to the PA Program. Applicants and matriculating students should possess these abilities, or with the help of compensatory techniques and or assistive devices, should be able to demonstrate ability to become proficient.

**Manual Dexterity:**
- Wrists (both)
- Body (height, weight, range, strength, etc.)
- Hands (both) Psychological status (general)
- Fingers (all) Coordination
- Arms (both) Vital signs
- Grasping
- Fingering
- Pinching Ability to use sterile technique and universal
- Pushing.
- Pulling
- Holding
- Twisting (rotating)
- Cutting
- Ability to operate and maintain equipment (e.g. ventilator, monitor, defibrillator)

**Sensation:**
- Palpation
- Auscultation
- Percussion
- Vision

**Physical strength:**
- To support another person
- To position another person
- To transfer to/ambulance with walker, cane, crutches, bed, chair
- Provide motion exercises
- To stand for long periods of time
- Ability to perform CPR/resuscitation

**Other:**
- To be poised and self-confident.
- To be able to read, write, understand and communicate proficiently and effectively in the English language.
- To be able to remain calm during emergency situations.
- To be able to meet and deal with people of differing backgrounds and behavioral patterns.
- To display and maintain mental and emotional stability.
- To be free from any active diseases that are infectious and may be spread by routine means, such as handshakes, skin contact, and breathing

Upon admission, a student who discloses a disability (with certification) is assured of reasonable accommodations. These accommodations may include: opportunities for individual and group counseling; peer counseling; linkages with community services; faculty advisory committees that are aware of disabled students and their needs; career counseling; assistance with job searches and interview skills; and, of course, the more familiar accommodations of extended test-taking time, and other enabling services. Students seeking accommodation initiate their request in the Office of Student Services.

**Disability Statement:** [https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/student-disability-services/](https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/student-disability-services/)
Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact Paula Moodie, the College of Medicine Disability Services Coordinator at pmoody@pennstatehealth.psu.edu or 717.531.0003 ext. 283693
For further information and to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact the College of Medicine Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) and provide required documentation. If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, the DSC will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. The DSC coordinator will work with your instructors to ensure the accommodations are provided.

The following websites should be referenced for additional information on the Office for Disability Services


Penn State University Office for Disability Services: [http://equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://equity.psu.edu/ods/)

Typical Accommodations include the following:

- Distraction Reduced Examination Environment
- Extended Examination Time
- Note Taker for Lectures
- Textbooks in Alternate Format

Cognitive Skills Program: [https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/cognitive-skills-program/](https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/cognitive-skills-program/)

The Cognitive Skills Program (CSP) provides comprehensive cognitive skills development and learning support to our medical, graduate, and physician assistant students.

The CSP offers workshops, interactive learning sessions, and individual support for exploring content, processes, and thinking skills to maximize our students’ success. The CSP serves all students in the College of Medicine by providing programs to help promote effective and efficient life-long learning. The CSP also provides remediation services for students who are struggling academically.

Programs are provided throughout the year based on student needs and interests, including:

- Study skills sessions, such as time management, studying and test-taking strategies
- Remediation and support for learning
- Strategies for content boosting
- Using technology to enhance learning
- The learning process and effective strategies for learning
- Collaboration and approaches for successful group learning

Through these and other engaging and transformative program offerings, students can learn how language, thinking, and metacognition directly impact their knowledge and understanding.
The CSP supports and empowers all students in developing essential skills, provides opportunities for applying these skills to relevant content, and guides students in implementing strategies for success at the College of Medicine.

Counseling Services
The Office of Student Mental Health and Counseling is pleased to offer counseling services to all students. These services are without cost to the student and are aimed at providing professional counseling for personal and academic difficulties. These services include learning support and evaluation services for students experiencing academic difficulties. In addition, counseling is available for career choices that students face as they progress through their training.

There is no cost to students who use this service and all records are confidential. They are NOT part of your PA school file. They are treated as health records and therefore are protected under federal law from being disclosed without your permission.

https://students.med.psu.edu/student-life/counseling/

To request an appointment please contact:

Kelly Holder, Ph.D.
717-531-8658
kholder@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Martha Peaslee-Levine, M.D.
Phone: 717.531.7232
Email: mlevine1@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Psychiatric services are available for students through Dr. Steve Sinderman in the Department of Psychiatry. The cost of these services is capped at $15 per session. Students can make an appointment with Dr. Sinderman by calling 717-531-8338

Sexual Harassment and Student Ombudsperson

The College of Medicine is committed to upholding the Penn State policy of providing a responsive environment free of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and coercion. Included in unacceptable behavior is sexual harassment, which is covered under policy AD-41. It is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature for submission to such conduct:

- is a condition for grades, academic status, promotion, or employment;
- is used as a basis for academic/employment/clinical placement decisions affecting an individual;
- interferes unreasonably with the individual’s academic/clinical performance or creates an offensive, hostile, or intimidating learning/working environment.
Any member of the College of Medicine Community who experiences sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior that interferes with the learning environment should contact the following individual at this campus for confidential assistance:

Jocelyn Miller, Domestic/Sexual Violence Medical Advocate, x5188, jmiller@ywcahbg.org

Students may also contact the Affirmative Action Office at University Park at 814-863-0471.

The resource person does not pressure students into decisions about handling the encounters - they provide support and empower students with information about choices for handling the situation and provide protection against retaliation. An appropriate warning, sometimes in the form of a letter, often terminates the problem without the need to file formal charges with the Affirmative Action Office. The resource person provides assistance if the student decides to file a formal charge with the Affirmative Action Office.

Ombudsmen
Both Peter Lewis, MD, and Pat McQuillan, MD, serve as ombudsmen for the physician assistant students. In this capacity, they will investigate harassment and other complaints brought forward by students and work to achieve an equitable solution. The purpose of an ombudsman is to enhance communication and clarify misunderstandings in any situation, which involves potential disputes, to provide information about possible courses of action and to help resolve issues so that they do not grow into more serious conflicts.

The ombudsman shall "thoroughly investigate each incident brought to his/her attention taking into account all sides of the issue, counsels the involved parties or makes referral for such counseling, provides periodic reports of such incidents and their outcomes/resolution to the Vice Dean of Educational Affairs, and seeks appropriate advice from senior academic or administrative faculty when necessary to assist in resolving issues of concern."

Peter Lewis, M.D.
Email: plewis@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
Phone: 717-531-8736

Patrick McQuillan, M.D.
Email: pmcquillan@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
Phone: 717-531-4264

Harassment

The Office for a Respectful Learning Environment (https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/respectful-learning-environment/) supports
students requesting their assistance and provides a means for students to report incidents where the student perceives that mistreatment has taken place.

The Policies on Respectful Treatment of Learners is listed at https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/respectful-learning-environment/policies/

George Blackall, Psy.D.
717.531.6148
gblackall@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Harassment is defined as verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person or a group based on color, race, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation where the offensive behavior is intimidating, hostile or demeaning or could or does result in mental, emotional or physical discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule or harm.

Harassment includes not only offensive behavior that interferes with a person’s or group's well-being or development, but also such behaviors that interfere with one’s employment, educational status, performance, or that create a hostile working, academic or social environment. In this regard, sexual violence is deemed to be a form of sexual harassment. It is a violation for a university person — student, faculty, staff, guest or visitor or anyone else, acting at the instigation of a university person — to:

1. Engage in any form of harassment whether intentional or unintentional on the campus or in the off-campus area.
2. Retaliate against a person who has initiated an inquiry or complaint having to do with harassment.

Racial Harassment
Racial harassment is defined as verbal, written or physical conduct — either a single incident or a persistent pattern of behavior — directed at a person or a group based on one’s color, race, national origin or ethnicity, where the offensive behavior is intimidating, hostile or demeaning or could or does result in mental, emotional or physical discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule or harm.

Harassment on the Basis of Sexual Orientation
Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is defined as any verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person or a group based on sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation where the offensive behavior is intimidating, hostile or demeaning or could or does result in mental, emotional or physical discomfort, embarrassment, ridicule or harm.

Sexual Violence
Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim’s use of drugs or alcohol. An individual also may be unable to give consent due to an intellectual or other disability.

Procedures
Students should never be placed in an environment where harassment occurs. It is the
program and Penn State’s goal and intent to create learning environments that are conducive to positive and respectful behavior at all times, with the students, faculty, and staff being held to a high standard of professional behavior. Environments which do not encourage and support respect, dignity, and professionalism at all times will not be tolerated.

If a student believes that he/she is placed in an environment where any type of harassment (including an intimidating environment), that student should formally approach the program director or ombudsmen, Dr. Peter Lewis or Dr. Pat McQuillan. All inquiries or grievances filed by the students will be investigated and resolved.

The Office of Human Resources may be contacted for counseling and assistance relating to affirmative action issues. Anyone with a question or concern about harassment is encouraged to contact one of the above offices for counsel and assistance.

Harassment complaints about a student should be filed with the program director. Harassment complaints about an employee should be filed with the employee’s immediate supervisor. If the complaint is with the immediate supervisor, the employee should contact the supervisor’s immediate superior. A complaint about a guest or visitor should be called to the attention of the program director or other appropriate program employee.

The right of confidentiality for any party involved in a harassment incident, including the complainant and the charged, will be respected insofar as it does not interfere with the university’s obligation to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action where appropriate.

**Culture of Respect in Education (CORE)**
https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/respectful-learning-environment/

**Policies on Respectful Treatment of Students & Trainees**

**Mistreatment Reporting Form**

Maintaining a culture of respect in our clinical learning environment is a core value of our institution with input from our trainees, as well as faculty, nursing staff, medical students, and others, we have developed the attached working document that describes the expected behaviors in our professional interactions. We also have provided examples of behaviors that we believe are not conducive to a productive educational experience.

As you interact with others, you may witness or experience behaviors that are suboptimal. If you believe that an encounter violates our core values for a respectful working environment or if you feel that you or others have been the object of mistreatment in the clinical or non-clinical settings, we would like you to help us to address these concerns in the appropriate fashion. There are many opportunities for you to do so, including; a discussion with the individual that you believe has been the source of disrespect or mistreatment, your Program Director, or others in your Program’s administration, the Department Chair or Associate Chair responsible for education within the department, your mentor(s), PA Program ombudsmen (Dr. Pat
McQuillan or Dr. Peter Lewis)

We are firmly committed to providing a clinical learning environment that allows each learner to reach the milestones necessary in their training to become a competent, compassionate physician.

This document can be completed either anonymously or with your contact information as part of this action. If you want to receive feedback for your complaint, you would need to provide your contact information or otherwise, this committee would not be able to provide this feedback to you. All allegations are investigated by this committee.

Any student or employee may also contact the affirmative action office/officer for counseling and assistance.

Students who violate the anti-harassment policy will be sanctioned by the program, as the program expects professional behavior on the part of the student. Sanctions can include disciplinary actions which might rise to the level of dismissal from the program. The Penn State PA program takes mutual respect and professional behavior seriously and will take appropriate measures in order to ensure that students are provided with the best educational experiences possible.

If a student on a supervised clinical practice believes that he/she is being put into an environment where any type of harassment is suspected, that student is to immediately contact the program’s clinical coordinator. If a student feels unsafe at any point during the supervised clinical practices, the student is to seek safety at once, notify appropriate authorities, and then notify the program’s clinical coordinator once you are in a safe environment. The program will make every attempt to place students in a safe environment but the program recommends that safety precautions be carried out at all times in every environment.

Grievance Policy/Complaint Policy

Students having an academically-related complaint/grievance are first directed to the faculty member who the grievance/complaint is directed against. If the student is uncomfortable with confronting the teacher directly, the student is asked to contact the Ombudsmen for the PA Program, Dr. Peter Lewis, plewis@pennstatehealth.psu.edu or Dr. Pat McQuillan, at pmcquillan@pennstatehealth.psu.edu.

If a student challenges a test question that is delivered via ExamSoft, paper/pencil, or directed practical, the student should complete the appropriate exam question appeal form. The instructor from the course will review this rebuttal and will let the student know if an alternative answer is accepted. These forms are available in the program office. These forms should be handed into the Program’s Administrative Staff as soon as the test review is performed. Challenges must be completed within one week of the test administration or as listed in the syllabus for the course. Challenges for these questions should contain an approved reference (assigned textbooks, lecture handouts) for supporting their argument. If an alternative answer is acceptable, the tests will be regarded and all students who have an acceptable alternative answer will be awarded credit for that particular answer. If a mistake has been made on the answer key, only correct answers for that particular question will be acceptable as the correct answer.
Nonacademic grievances can also be filed by students. Students can also file grievances/complaints regarding veteran’s status, disability status, or complaints regarding race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, or national origin.

**Grievance Procedures**
The Pennsylvania State University has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution to complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

For further information on the discrimination grievance procedures, refer to the Affirmative Action Office web site at: [http://www.psu.edu/dept/aaoffice/access_whatwedo.htm](http://www.psu.edu/dept/aaoffice/access_whatwedo.htm)

Complaints should be addressed to the:

**Affirmative Action Office**
328 Boucke Building
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: (814) 863-0471 V/TTY
E-mail: aao@psu.edu

Disability services are also provided by Penn State University for the PA students. The URL for viewing this extensive document is: [http://med.psu.edu/web/college/disability-services](http://med.psu.edu/web/college/disability-services). Grievances/complaints in this venue can be filed with the Affirmative Action Office at Penn State University at the main campus with the contact information related to the above address, phone number, and email address.

**Guidance**
Penn State University maintains an Office of Career Services at University Park, which provides assistance to graduating students with self-assessment, resumé preparation and related correspondence, effective job search strategies, and successful job interview skills. The PA Program Office will maintain, to the extent possible, records of employment opportunities and will direct students appropriately. Program faculty will direct students to employment opportunities that fit the student’s skills and preparation. Job opportunities are sent via email to all current students and alumni. These services are provided by the Program during the clinical year and following graduation.

**Post Graduation**
Graduates of the Penn State Physician Assistant Program are invited to attend the Penn State College of Medicine’s May Commencement Ceremonies. This annual event is held at the Milton S. Hershey School in Founders Hall. Graduate degrees will be conferred by the President of Penn State University and the Dean of the College of Medicine.

The national board certification examination is held at various sites and times around the country. This examination is completely computer-based. Students must register for the test prior to the application deadline and can take the test as soon as 7 days after the Program completion date. Information regarding testing times and locations is available through the NCCPA website ([www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net))
Upon graduation, students are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE). The testing agency will provide information about graduation pass rates and scores. This data provides feedback about cumulative student knowledge and is an invaluable assessment tool for the curriculum. For Physician Assistant licensing requirements, this test must be successfully passed in order for licensing to occur. If the test is not successfully passed, graduates are no longer able to practice as graduate physician assistants and must relinquish any temporary licensure. If the graduate Physician Assistant fails the national boards, the official medical professional board in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be notified. The temporary license is then revoked, and the student cannot legally practice as a Physician Assistant until he/she has passed the national boards. For graduates who do not pass the national certifying examination on the first attempt, there is a mandatory waiting period prior to retaking this examination. For licensure to be obtained the student must wait for the successful results to be sent to the state and the state must process this information prior to the graduate being able to practice as a licensed physician assistant. If a graduate fails to pass the PANCE, the graduate can expect at least a 6 month delay into his/her professional career.

Graduate membership in professional organizations provides an indication of the degree to which professional involvement values have been fostered by the program. The PA Program supports graduate membership in the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) and the state chapters of physician assistant programs across the country.

The accomplishment of the program's goals and objectives are best assessed through graduate surveys. The PA Program will survey its graduates for information such as employment environment, program preparation for the profession, and professional activities. The Program recognizes that the post-graduation survey will require the cooperation and permission of the graduates, and hopes that information of interest to alumni can be included and shared at the end of the survey, thereby increasing the desire to respond.

In order to be employed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a Physician Assistant program graduate needs to have a recognized supervising physician and may have an unlimited number of substitute supervising physician(s). After graduation and before the announcement that the Physician Assistant has passed the national boards, it is possible for the Physician Assistant employed in Pennsylvania to be employed under the direct supervision of a supervising physician utilizing a temporary licensing arrangement dictated by the Commonwealth. Temporary licenses are awarded only for Physician Assistants employed by allopathic physicians (MD). There is no temporary licensure for graduate physician assistants who are employed by osteopathic physicians in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For graduates who practice in other states, please refer to that state’s board of medicine for further information regarding licensing. Not all states have allowances for temporary practice prior to getting the national certification examination.

All states require passage of the national certifying examination in order to practice and obtain full licensure.
After passing the national certified board exam and receiving official notification, the graduate Physician Assistant can then officially use the initials PA-C after his/her name.

If the graduate has applied for licensing in another state and he/she fails the national certification examination, the graduate will also need to notify that state of practice. If that state has issued a temporary license, it must be relinquished. Failure to pass the national certification examination will prohibit full licensing for practice. The graduate who does not pass the national certification examination needs to pass a subsequent examination in order to apply for licensure to practice.

If a graduate physician assistant continues to see patients or continues to work in the health care field after notification that he/she did not successfully pass the national certifying examination, legal ramifications could ensue. If the graduate continues to practice in any capacity as a health care provider, the graduate could be sanctioned by the board and this could lead to criminal prosecution such as practicing medicine without a license.

If a practicing physician assistant is sanctioned by a state licensing board, this sanction becomes a matter of public record. When the physician assistant subsequently applies for credentialing or other employment, this sanction by the board will be discoverable. Sanctions by the board may interfere with potential areas of employment and for obtaining credentials at a licensed health care facility. Additionally, the sanctioned physician assistant will also need to disclose this action by the state board of medicine when application for licensure (or continued licensure) is obtained.

Information regarding licensing from other states is obtained by writing or calling the state's medical or licensing boards. States have their own requirements for licensing, and Physician Assistants must register in each state in which the graduate will practice.
Post Graduation Residencies

A graduate from an accredited PA program can apply to post graduation residencies following completion of the Penn State Physician Assistant Program. Currently, post graduation training programs are available in the following specialties: acute care/critical care, behavioral health, cardiology, child and adolescent psychiatry, CT surgery, emergency, heart and vascular surgery, hospital internal medicine, neonatology, neurosurgery, ob/gyn, oncology, ortho/sports medicine, otolaryngology, pediatrics, and pediatric urgent care, primary care and urgent care, surgery, trauma, urology. A PA who wishes to practice in those areas can also do so by taking a position and gaining further experience through "on the job training". Generally, the formal training programs offer a stipend to the student while the training is taking place. These residencies typically offer a certificate of completion rather than an advanced degree (except for the military programs which are limited to only active duty military personnel). To view ARC-PA accredited post-grad fellowships go to: http://www.arc-pa.org/postgrad_programs/acc_clinical_programs.html

Other Information

- Students should refer to their syllabi for class meetings, attendance, grading, and testing schedules. Professors may require a doctor’s excuse for making up any missed test. Students are responsible for making up any missed material during the lecture series. It is appreciated if the student contacts the instructor of the missed course regarding the reason as to why the absence occurred. If the student is going to miss the class due to time away from campus, the program will work with the student to seamlessly make up the material that was covered in the missed class.

- The Program will utilize outside speakers for some aspects of the curriculum. Lectures may be provided on campus as part of the College of Medicine various grand rounds and specialized lectures. Students may be tested on these topic areas, so students should prepare notes from these lectures. Learning objectives may be provided for these outside lectures if they are not provided during the lecture themselves. Students should not expect that these lecturers will be providing handouts or notes to the class since they are under no obligation to provide these notes. If the Program receives a copy of the lecture notes or power points, it will place this material on ANGEL for the students to obtain.

- Any questions regarding the content of this Student Handbook should be directed to the Program Director for further clarification or discussion.

Length of Time for Completion of Courses:

When matriculating into the Penn State PA Program, the student will have a total of 3 years for completion of the program beginning at the time of matriculation. Ordinarily, a student who begins the PA program will have time and 1/2 program completion or a total of 9 semesters of time. The additional completion time past the twenty-four months or six semesters is reserved for students who are granted a leave of absence at some point in the program. Students will request a leave of absence that the Vice Dean of Educational Affairs will grant or deny. This leave will be granted with a specific timeframe for return to the PA program.
It should be kept in mind that only one cohort of classes are enrolled yearly. If a student steps out of the pre-clinical training, step back into the program would need to be done when that particular semester is restarted, typically during the next calendar year. If a student steps out of training during the supervised clinical practice portion of the program, he/she can re-enter the program depending on the availability of those particular sites that the student needs to complete.

Re-entry will also be dependent upon space availability of the re-entering student because PA programs are only accredited for a limited number of students enrolled in the program.

The Penn State PA Program realizes that this is a graduate program and that some members of the class will encounter events that may require the student to temporarily separate from the program due to personal reasons (such as medical or emotional issues). Students will ordinarily need to complete the program within 3 years of program entry. If a student takes off more than one semester, the program may require that the student take a reentry examination to come back into the program so that the student is able to demonstrate ongoing sufficient knowledge base retention. The request for a leave of absence will be sent to the office of student services who will decide on the applicability of this leave and will work with the students to plan a return to the PA program. The requirements for program completion will still apply to students, regardless of whether they take a leave or not.

**Conclusion**

The Penn State College of Medicine Physician Assistant Program attempts to educate students for the clinical and professional practice of medicine. The faculty is committed to providing the necessary tools for our students to succeed. We support and respect our students and expect that this respect and support will be mutual. We have developed a Program that will meet both the students’ and program’s goals and expectations. We believe that graduates of this program will be able to fill a need for outstanding physician assistants in central Pennsylvania.

We welcome you, the Class of 2019, to begin this tradition of excellence. Communication is key to establishing a good relationship between the students and the Program. We are here to help you to achieve your goal of becoming a licensed physician assistant.
# College of Medicine Quick Contact List

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<tr>
<th>Office or Department</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Direct Line/Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bursar's Office (Student Billing)</td>
<td>Amy McManamon</td>
<td>717.531.6126 <a href="mailto:bursar-COM@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">bursar-COM@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Campus Registrar</td>
<td>Diane Gill</td>
<td>717.531.4105 <a href="mailto:dgill@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">dgill@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Cognitive Skills Program</td>
<td>Jennifer Meka, Ph.D.</td>
<td>717.531.0003 x. 287646 <a href="mailto:jmeka@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">jmeka@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Counseling Services</td>
<td>Kelly Holder, Ph.D.</td>
<td>717.531.8658 <a href="mailto:kholder@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">kholder@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Disability Services</td>
<td>Paula Moodie</td>
<td>717.531.0003 x.283693 <a href="mailto:pmoodie@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">pmoodie@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>Karla Gurian</td>
<td>717.531.7052 <a href="mailto:studentaid@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">studentaid@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Harrell Library</td>
<td>Program Guide:</td>
<td>717.531.8626 <a href="mailto:herref@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">herref@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://harrell.library.psu.edu/Physician_Assistants">http://harrell.library.psu.edu/Physician_Assistants</a></td>
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<td>Ombudsman</td>
<td>Peter Lewis, MD</td>
<td>717-531-8736 717.531.4264</td>
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<td>Pat McQuillan, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Housing</td>
<td>Keith Dishart</td>
<td>717.531.8210 <a href="mailto:housing@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">housing@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Student Health</td>
<td>Patricia Hamner, Nurse Manager</td>
<td>717.531.5998 <a href="mailto:student_health@pennstatehealth.psu.edu">student_health@pennstatehealth.psu.edu</a></td>
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PA Program Faculty and Staff

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  Enrollment Services Manager/Director of Admissions

Jodi Verbos; 717-531-0003 x285595; jverbos@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
  Program Coordinator

Erika Dupes; 717-531-0003 x.281114; edupes@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
  Education Program Assistant - Clinical Year

Part-time Program Faculty include:
Hector Lopez, MD is the anatomy, radiology, and emergency medicine course director

Bernadette Gilbert, MD joins our faculty in a part-time position and will have various assignments and involvement with the students.
Physician Assistant Oath
The Program also endorses the Physician Assistant Oath, which was created by the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants. All students are expected to uphold the precepts in the PA Oath:

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, non-malfeasance and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.
Appendix A:
Penn State’s System-Wide ATOD Policies

Policy AD18 POSSESSION, USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
For details:  http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD18.html
Overview: The use, possession and distribution of alcoholic beverages are prohibited upon the property of The Pennsylvania State University unless specifically authorized. Where such use, possession and distribution are permitted, strict compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is required. The laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are published as the "Liquor Code," PL90, April 12, 1951, and the Liquor Control Board Regulations. The possession and use of alcoholic beverages, subject to the laws of the Commonwealth, is permitted by persons twenty-one (21) years of age or older in a facility licensed by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, and in individual housing units (rooms, apartments and houses) owned by The Pennsylvania State University.

Policy AD32 SMOKING POLICY AND GUIDELINE
For details:  http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD32.html
Overview: Smoking of any material is prohibited in all University facilities, at all locations, including University-owned vehicles. It also is prohibited in any outside area adjacent to a facility whose configuration and/or other physical circumstances allow smoke either to enter and affect the internal environment or to unduly affect the environment of those entering or exiting the facility. Exemptions to this policy may be made by the Smoking Policy Review Committee if the committee deems granting the exemption to be reasonable for business or research reasons as submitted by the unit that requests the exemption.

Policy AD33 A DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
For details:  http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD33.html
Overview: It is the policy of The Pennsylvania State University that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, on property owned, leased or controlled by the University and used in the performance of University services is prohibited. Every student shall abide by the terms of this policy and he or she shall notify The Program of any criminal drug conviction for a violation occurring in the University workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.

Penn State Student Conduct CODE OF CONDUCT
For details:  http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/codeofconduct/
Overview: Illegally possessing, using, distributing, manufacturing, selling or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is a violation of this policy. Use, possession or distribution of beverages containing alcohol on University property shall comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and University Policies and Rules. Anyone, including those under 21, serving alcohol to persons under 21 is in violation of both University regulations and state law. Excessive consumption occurs when a person is intoxicated to the degree that the person may endanger self, other persons, or property, or annoy persons in the vicinity. (Also see Policies AD-18, AD-33). It is also a violation a violation of the residence hall contract for a student to be in the presence of the
presence of the use of illegal drugs or if under 21 years of age, alcohol, in any residential area.
Acknowledgement for Receipt & Review

Must be returned to the Program

I acknowledge that I have received the Penn State College of Medicine Physician Assistant Student Handbook. I also acknowledge that addenda to this Handbook can be made at anytime at the discretion of the program. My signature verifies that I have read the handbook in its entirety, had all of my questions answered, and that I agree to abide by its policies.

I understand that I am responsible for following all the provisions set forth by this student handbook while I am enrolled in the program. I recognize that these policies are provided to support my professional and clinical development and help me become a successful physician assistant.

I understand what is expected of me as a student of the Penn State College of Medicine Physician Assistant Program and realize the College of Medicine and its Physician Assistant Program will not accept a plea of ignorance for failure to abide by these policies.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Sign, Date and return to:
Penn State PA Program
PO Box 850, Mail Code H152
Hershey, PA 17033

OR scan and email to:
Caryn Stopper
cstopper@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

OR return to Program Office CG638

Each student will receive a bound copy of the Student Handbook for reference throughout their educational experience at Penn State College of Medicine.